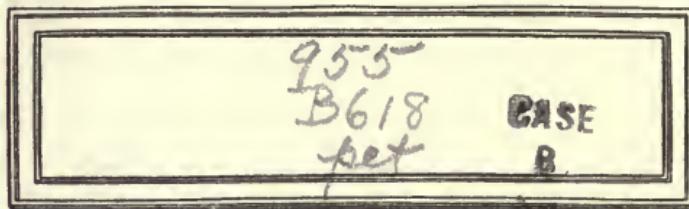
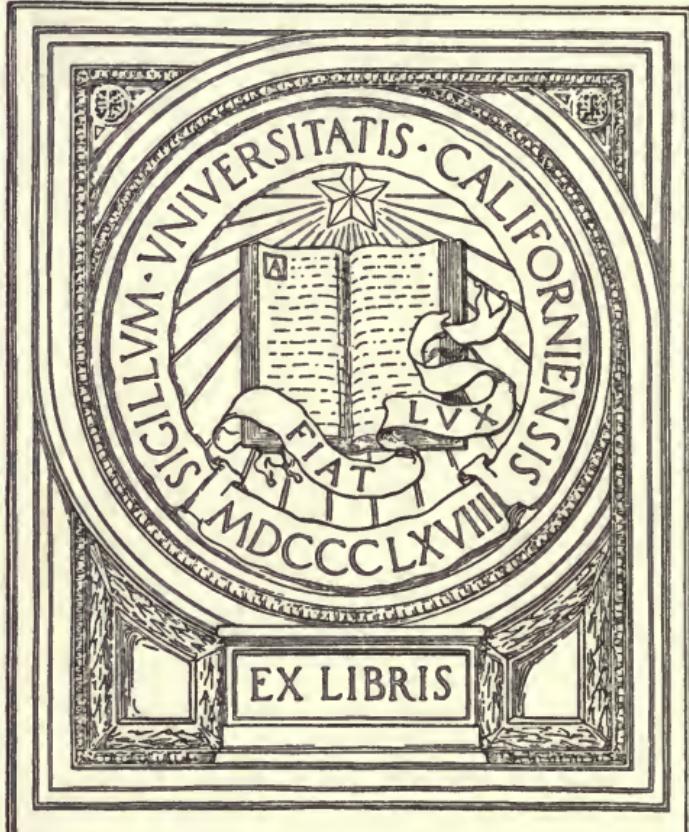


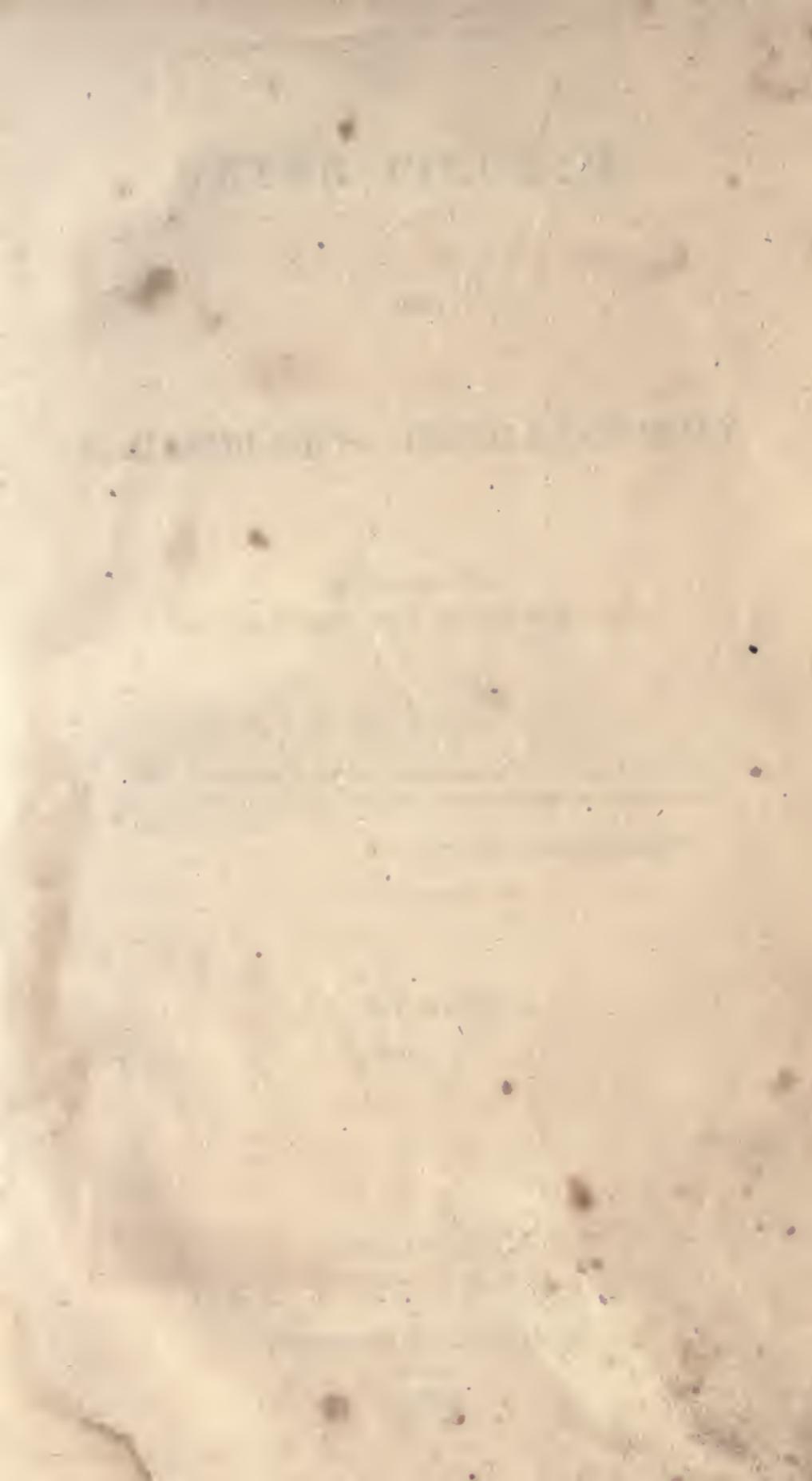
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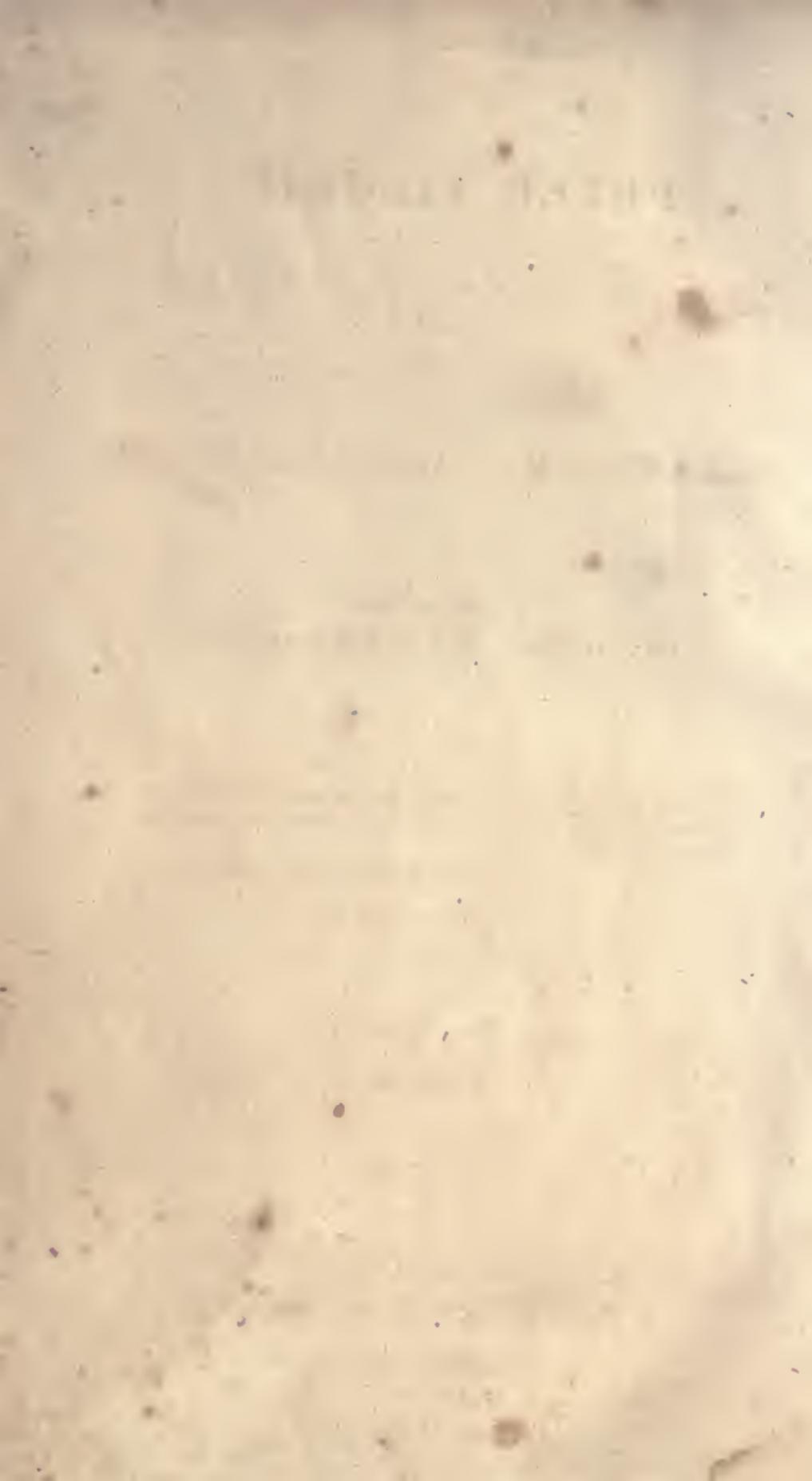


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Bird, Robert Montgomery

PETER PILGRIM:

OR

A RAMBLER'S RECOLLECTIONS.

BY THE AUTHOR
OF "CALAVAR," "NICK OF THE WOODS," &c.

And sometimes I do for my recreation now and then walk abroad, look into the world, and cannot choose but make some little observation.

BURTON'S *Anat. of Melancholy.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA:
LEA & BLANCHARD,
SUCCESSORS TO CAREY & CO.

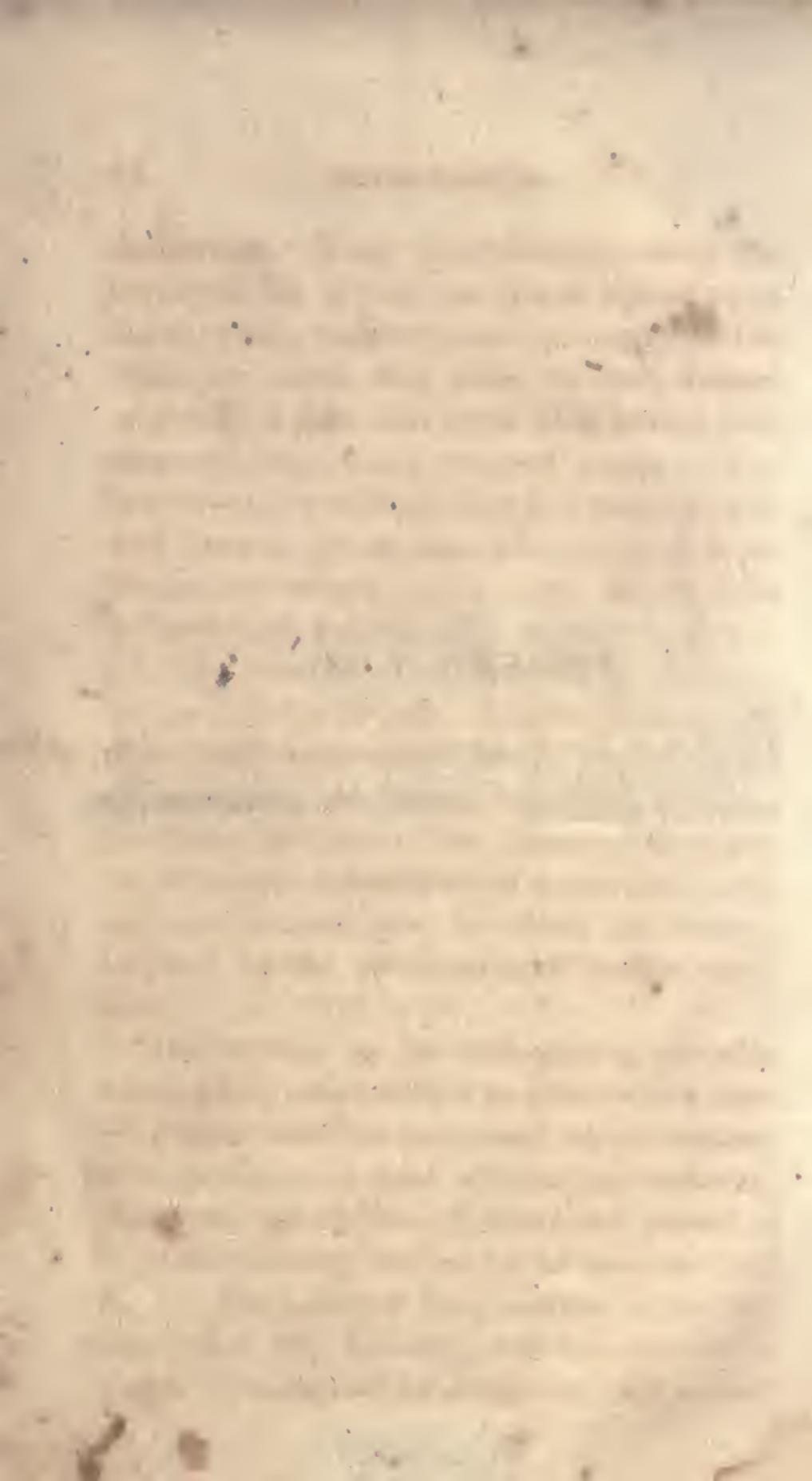
1838.

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UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA,

PETER PILGRIM.

A NIGHT

ON THE

TERRAPIN ROCKS.

CHAPTER I.

ALL persons who have visited Niagara (and who has not?) are aware, that the rocks stretching in a broken chain from Goat Island far out into the Horseshoe Fall, giving foundation to the bridge by which the visiter reaches the brink of the cataract, are designated as the Terrapin Rocks—a name scarce worthy the dignity of their position, but rendered somewhat appropriate by a resemblance, which fancy readily traces in them, to a cluster of gigantic turtles, sprawling in

the torrent. They lie confusedly along the verge of the watery precipice, extending a distance of a hundred yards or more from the island, of which they seem to have formed originally a part—the ruins of a jutting promontory long since washed away. The bridge—a low path of logs and planks, as is well known—gives access to many of these fragments: others again may be reached without such assistance, from the island: and the adventurous spirit, tempted by the very wildness of the exploit, will often seek among them some convenient perch, where, poised perhaps over the tremendous gulf, with the flood on either side of him, shooting furiously by, he enjoys a spectacle of unequalled magnificence in itself, and to which the feelings inspired by the situation add double sublimity.

The bridge, at its termination, projects several feet over the fall; and here the visiter may enjoy both the scene and the excitement of a half-fancied peril, without encountering the risk, which would certainly attend a scramble among the rocks, by any one not having his nervous propensities under full command. A fall—the consequence of a single mis-step—into a current that rather

darts than runs, and a whirl down an abyss of a hundred and sixty feet perpendicular depth—are consequences that may easily happen; and the thought of them is, in general, sufficient to keep visitors on the bridge.

Yet use doth breed a habit in a man. I do not think I possess any philosophic contempt of raging billows: and I have, especially, very poor and unhappy brains for looking down precipices. Yet there was something in the glory of Niagara that chased away my fears—it may be, swallowed them up in the all-engrossing passion of delight; something in the sublime position of those naked rocks, too, which, when once reached, substituted for trembling apprehension a nobler feeling—a feeling as of enthronement, and rule, and power over the majestic torrent.

One day, while sitting upon one of these grim thrones, speculating, after the true motley-manner, upon the ever-falling flood, in which fancy saw represented the river of human life, with the cataract of death, over which it was eternally falling, and wondering what difference it made to the drop pitching down the steep, whether rocks had vexed, or smoother channels lulled it into security, on the way; my attention was attracted to a

stranger, whom I had previously noticed on the bridge, and who, besides myself, was the only living creature at that moment to be seen on, or near, the fall. He stood grasping the rail of the bridge, pale, agitated, and eyeing myself, as I soon found, with a look that I interpreted into a call for assistance—a call which terror, sickness, or some unknown cause, I supposed, prevented his making by word of mouth.

I left my rock, which was only rendered temporarily accessible, in consequence of a huge log having lodged against it, as well as against another nearer the bridge, forming a stepping-tree that the first swell of the flood must wash away, and hurried to the stranger's assistance, without, however, having any very clear idea what ailed him. As I stepped upon the bridge, he seized me by the hand, and with the fervent ejaculation, "Heaven be praised!" hurried me up to his side, pretty much with the air of one who, in mortal affright himself, has just snatched another out of imminent danger. "Heaven be praised!" he cried; "I was frightened for you; or, rather, I—I—" Here he became confused, as if awaking from a dream—"I was frightened for myself!"

All this was very mysterious and incomprehensible to me; which my countenance showing, the gentleman—for indeed he was a man both of good appearance and manners—exclaimed, “I beg your pardon: I believe I have been acting like a fool, and talking like one. But the appearance of a human being sitting on that rock, unmanned me: I thought it was *myself*, and—and—. In short, sir, I scarce know what I am saying. You seem amazed at my trepidation. Yet I can tell you of an adventure on that rock, which will excuse my weakness. Yes—that is, if you will but walk with me to some secure place—to the island; for, I freely admit, my thoughts are *here* too much disordered.”

My curiosity being raised, and somewhat of an interest excited in the stranger, whose years, for he was in the prime of life, his tall and robust frame, and manly countenance, seemed inconsistent with the weakness of fear,—I readily attended him to the island. His agitation decreased, as we approached it; and, by and by, when we had plunged amid its sweet bowers, walking towards its upper borders, whither he begged me to accompany him, it vanished so entirely, that he was able like myself, to note and admire the number-

less beauties, which make almost an elysium of this fairy island.

Was there ever, indeed, a spot so lovely as Goat Island? Couched on the breast of the fall, surrounded by the mighty floods, that go rushing by with the velocity, and ten times the power and fury, of the wind—a very hurricane of waters; lashed, beaten, worried, perpetually devoured by them; it lies amid the roar and convulsion, its little islets around it, green, lovely, and peaceful, an Eden on the face of chaos. Hid in its groves of beech and maple, of larch and hemlock, oak, linden and tuliptree; in its peeping glades, embowered with vines and ivies, and towering sumachs that cluster rich and red as Persian roses all around; the raspberry hanging from the bush, the strawberry and the bluebell glimmering together on the ground; the bee and the butterfly, the grasshopper and the humming-bird pursuing their pretty tasks all around; the sparrow and the mocking bird singing aloft; the dove cooing, the woodpecker tapping, in the shade; you might here dream away an anchoritish existence, scarce conscious of the proximity of the cataract, whose voice comes to your ear, a softened murmur, that seems only the hum of other birds and insects.

a little further off. A step brings you to its borders, and here you look over a wall of torrent to the world, from which you are yet sundered far enough to satisfy even the complaining Timon. Here you may muse and moralize over "man, that quintessence of dust," and yet indulge the yearning to be near him of which no misanthrope can wholly divest himself; here, in your island, your

desert inaccessible,
Under the shade of melancholy boughs,

you may rail at the monster, without being exasperated by, or entirely banished from, his presence.

Following my new friend through the lovely walks of the island, and still keeping on its western borders, we reached a charming nook, where a cluster of several rocky and wooded islets was separated from Goat Island only by a narrow channel, through which, however, the current flowed with great tumult and violence. The trunk of a spruce tree, half submerged by the flood, in which it shook with perpetual tremor, offered a passage to the nearer islet to such as were inclined to avail themselves of it. But that

was not I; I liked not the appearance of the aguish log, over which, every now and then, the torrent made a complete breach, leaping into the air like a gallant and impatient hunter taking a five-barred gate, and then plunging down again to pursue its impetuous course. Nor was my companion a whit more disposed to the adventure than myself. On the contrary, he gazed upon the foamy bridge with some share of the agitation he had previously displayed. From this, however, he soon recovered, and even laughed at his weakness; after which, sitting down with me at the roots of an ancient tree, the roaring channel at our feet, he related the incident of adventure the mere allusion to which had aroused my curiosity. He was, he gave me to understand a citizen of the West—of Illinois; but born in the Empire State, which he was now revisiting with no other object than to renew a brief acquaintance with the scenes of his youth. But it is proper he should speak his story in his own words.

A NIGHT
ON THE
TERRAPIN ROCKS.

CHAPTER II.

“ My earliest breath was drawn in the great metropolis; from which, I thank heaven, I have escaped to become a freeman of the prairies. The slavery of a city life, not to speak of the more intolerable bondage of trade, I early learned to detest; and I as early made an effort to throw off my chains, and turn savage. You know what the philosopher—I believe it is Humboldt—says: ‘ It is with the beginning of civilization as with its decline: man appears to repent of the restraint which he has imposed on himself by entering into society; and he seeks the solitude, and loves it, because it restores him to his former freedom.’ I was beginning to be

civilized—that is, I was beginning to make a fortune, which is one and the same thing—when the impulse seized me, and I turned my face to the West. My first place of sojourn was the banks of this very river, the glorious Niagara, on which, as you perceive, I can scarce look without starting up to run away;—not that I am very deeply galled by the looks of civilization it now wears—its towns and cities, its shops and taverns, its mills and factories with which they are, here at the falls, striving to mar Heaven's handy-work; but because every look recalls to memory a terrible adventure that once befel me upon it, and which has converted my once ardent love of the majestic tide into fear and abhorrence.

“I was already wearying of the increase of population around me, but not yet able to tear myself from scenes so lovely and beloved, when the projectors of a very pardonable innovation succeeded in throwing a bridge over to Goat Island, and thus opened to the eye of man haunts that were only before accessible through means the most difficult and dangerous. These little islets before us, and, I believe, several others on the east side, were brought under subjection in the

same manner; and the project of bridging the Terrapin Rocks was also talked of; though that was left to be completed at a later period. The Terrapin Rocks still lay amid the curling billows, on the verge of the fall, as they had lain for a thousand years, untouched and unapproached by the foot of man. Often have I—among the first to ramble up and down the island, admiring its virgin solitudes, its beauties yet uninvaded and undefiled—sat upon yonder bluff, viewing those blackened rocks, and longing for the commencement and completion of the projected bridge, that I might be upon them. That very rock upon which you sat, I had fixed upon, in prospect, as the seat from which I should survey the flood, making a pleasure of fear, and enjoying the luxury of danger. It is true, that rock appeared entirely isolated from the others; but that, with its exposed situation on the very edge of the precipice, formed its charm. I saw, or fancied, that I might reach it by the same means accident provided for you—by lodging a log against it. I was thus, in intention, guilty of the act, which I am now wise enough to pronounce midsummer madness in another."

I made the narrator a bow; he smiled, and continued his story.

“Meanwhile, that I might not neglect pleasures within my reach, while longing for those as yet unattainable, I did not fail to pursue the pastime of fishing, of which I was then extremely enamoured. Moored in my little skiff along the lonely shores of Grand Island, listing the ripple of the current and the thunder of the distant falls, I enjoyed a sense of liberty, hooked my nibbling white-fish, compared them to human beings, my fellows, all as eager to nibble at the baits of fortune, and thus played the moralist and tyrant together.

“One sunny evening, while thus engaged, and with but little luck, the quiet of the hour and the scene, added to the charms of my philosophy, prevailed over me, and I fell fast asleep in my boat; and so remained for half an hour, dreaming, good, easy man, I was hauling up whitefish with men’s faces, and other piscatory monsters, all in great numbers, and with the ease and rapidity a fisherman loves.

“On a sudden I awoke. The screams of my victims—for methought they opened their

mouths and cried for mercy—had disturbed my conscience and startled me out of my slumber.

“It was sunset: the shadows of the Canadian hills were stealing over the river, and the dusky twilight was gathering fast. For a few moments, my thoughts were in the confusion of slumber but half dispelled. The screams of my visionary captives still sounded in my ears; or, at least, I thought they did; until gradually made aware that the cries I now heard were those of human beings, whom I saw running wildly along the Canada shore, tossing their arms, and betraying other signs of the greatest agitation. I felt a drowsy surprise at the spectacle, and, for a moment, half wondered what had become of the island cove, with its hanging trees and jutting rocks, in which I had moored my boat; and what was the meaning of those dimmer and more distant shores, that seemed gliding past me like the phantasmas of a dream. Nay, I even wondered what caused the commotion of the people on shore—at what they were beckoning and screaming.

“A louder yell from them broke the last remaining bonds of sleep; and I started up in my skiff, restored for the first time to full

consciousness. My boat had broke her moorings, and, God of Heaven! I was in the rapids!

“ Yes, in that fatal slumber—fatal, yet tranquil as the sleep of happiness—I had been floating down the tide, hearing, in my dreams, the shrieks of warning sent to me from the shore, yet hearing them all in vain, until it was too late to profit by them. I was in the rapids, plunging down the watery declivity towards the horrible gulf, from which nothing but the wings of an eagle could save me. Oh, the agony of that discovery—the sting of that moment of horror !

“ But was there no escape ? I was but a hundred yards from the shore, and my oars were swinging loose on their pivots. I seized them with the energy of despair; but a fierce blast burst from the shore, and whirled me still further into the current. Away, away—down, down—in spite of my exertions, which were as the struggles of an insect in a tornado; faster and faster, wilder and wilder—nothing helped, nothing availed, save to add double bitterness to my cup of misery. The rapids grew fiercer and rougher, and, on a sudden, the oars were shivered to pieces in my hands. I started up with the mad thought of flinging myself into the tide and swimming for my life; but I was now midway in the channel,

and the fury of the galloping billows all around me palsied heart and limb: there was no hope, there was no escape—the falls had secured their victim.

“I sat down, and covered my eyes with my hands; but it was only for an instant. I could not thus die tamely, like a fettered brute.

“I rose again, frantic—fiercely mad—determined to leap into the water, and die at least struggling. My boat was already among the breakers on the reef running from the head of the island. Look! you may see them through the spruces: how they leap up, striding and curling over the hidden rocks, pillars and arches of foam, beautiful yet dreadful to behold!

“Among these horrible billows my boat darted like an arrow, struck a rock, and was shivered to atoms. As for me, tossed twenty feet into the air by the shock, I had just enough of consciousness to exult in the thought that death was snatching me from suffering. In one moment more, I was swimming in the torrent, grasping at rocks over which I was borne with rending violence, and from which I was torn before my fingers could clutch them. A few months before, in constructing the bridge to the island, a man had fallen into

the flood, and saved himself by clinging to a rock. I had heard of the expedient by which he was enabled to catch hold of the rock, and now sought to imitate it. Instead of striking out towards the island as I had been endeavouring to do, though, miserable me! with no hope of reaching it, I turned my face *up* the flood, and strained every nerve to moderate the velocity of my flight through the current. The expedient succeeded. My body came in contact with a rock, which I was able to grasp in my hands, and retain hold of for a moment.

“It was only for a moment: my body formed an obstruction over which the waters leaped and foamed as over a new rock; and away they at last whirled me, drowning and helpless, still struggling, but struggling, as I well knew, wholly in vain.

“Away, again, down the ridgy steep I went swimming and rolling, now whelmed, now upon the surface, stealing a ghastly look of the sky that was to be dark to me for ever, bruised, wounded, strangling, and stunned by the thunder of the cataract over which I was hastening to fall.

“That thunder grew every instant louder and more appalling; I could already see the

hideous rim of the cataract—the sudden sinking of the flood, known by its border of foam, mingled with the yellow light transmitted through the edge of the down-curling water. This I saw with what I deemed my last look; but that look disclosed to me a black cluster of rocks among, or very near to which I was evidently hurrying. A prayer came to my lips; I screamed it to Heaven; and with efforts of strength that were rather convulsions than natural struggles, struck out towards them, hoping the torrent might dash me among them. The torrent did dash me among them; but it was not until the very last of them had been reached that I found myself able to grasp it, to maintain my hold, and to crawl from the accursed flood. I was saved! I lay secure upon the rock—that very rock which I had so often longed to visit—a prisoner in the midst, and upon the verge, of the cataract.

A NIGHT
ON THE
TERRAPIN ROCKS.

CHAPTER III.

“ I LAY upon the rock exhausted and fainting, and, for a time, almost insensible. But, by and by, I recovered strength and looked around me. How horrible was the prospect! Night was closing around me; and there I crouched upon my rock—so small as scarce to permit me to lie at length—on one side of it the abyss, on all the others the roaring waters. My hair bristled, as I peeped down the chasm; my heart withered, when I looked upon the expanse of torrent hemming me in, the tumbling billows that menaced me as they approached, and mocked me as they rushed by and leaped down the precipice.

“ It was almost night, but objects were still faintly discernible on the shore. I saw hu-

man figures moving on Table Rock. Were they the men who had seen me in the rapids, hailed me, waked me from my fatal sleep, and followed after me, running along the banks, to—no, not to *help* me! Man could not do that—but to witness my fate? I rose upon my feet, and shouted at the wildest stretch of my voice. It was breath wasted—the twittering of a sparrow in a tempest, the cry of a drowning mariner in the midst of an ocean: the sound was scarcely audible to myself. They heard me not; they saw me not: the night was darkening upon them, and they stole away from the falls. What difference made it to me, whom, had they seen me, they could have only pitied? Yet I wept, when I saw them no more. There was something of support, something of comfort, even in the sight of a human being, though afar off, and incapable of rendering me any assistance.

“By and by, it was wholly night; but a full moon was stealing up the sky, throwing, first, a yellow, ghastly lustre, and then, as she mounted higher, a silver glory, over the scene. A party of visitors came down upon the Table Rock to view the falls by moonlight: I could see the fluttering of white scarfs

and dresses—there were women among them—women, the soft-hearted, the humane, the pitying. I rose again; I waved my arms; I shouted. They look!—It is upon the waters, among which I am—nothing, a straw, a mote, a speck, invisible and unregarded. They looked, and they departed; and I was again in solitude—as lonely, as friendless, as hopeless, as if the sole dweller of the sphere.

“Presently, as the night lapsed on, clouds gathered over the sky, and the moon was occasionally hidden, now and then to dart down a snowy beam through the driving rack, giving a wild and spectral character to the scene, which was before sufficiently awful. There were even indications of a storm: pale sheets of lightning ever and anon whitened along the sky, and perhaps the thunder rolled; but that I heard not—the thunders of the cataract swallowed up the detonations of heaven. A breeze—there was ever a breeze there, the gusts from the vexed gulf below; but this was a wind that prevailed over the gusts of the fall—came down from the lake, and grew momently in strength. I almost expected the hour, when, growing into fury, it should whirl me from my miserable rock, and plunge me down the falls. My next

thought was full as terrible: this breeze blowing from the lake—must it not increase the volume of waters flowing down the river? Ay, and by and by, of all these rocks, now breasting and repelling the flood, there will not be one that is not covered a foot deep, a mighty billow foaming over it! What then becomes of me, denied secure possession even of my wretched rock?

“As I thought these things, deeming my misery greater than I could bear, greater than that wherewith heaven had afflicted any other mortal, a shriek echoed in my ear; and looking round, I beheld a boat in the rapids not fifty yards off, and within but as many feet of the fall, and in it a man, who seemed like myself to have been asleep, and was but now awaked to a consciousness of his situation. He shrieked, started up, uttered one more cry, and then vanished over the fall.

“This dreary spectacle appeased my clamours; it left me stupified, yet clinging with convulsive grasp to the rock on which, I felt, I had yet a brief term of existence.

“The moon continued to rise, the clouds to darken, the lightnings to grow brighter; and, after a time, the storm I had apprehended, burst over me; the artillery of heaven was,

at last, heard pealing and crashing, and adding its elemental music to the boom of the waters. But before the storm burst, how many new incidents were added to that midnight adventure! Other things of life—things to which life was as dear as to me, yet all more wretched than I—passed over the falls within my sight. An eagle, blown by the tempest from his perch—or, perhaps, maimed by a gunner, and thus precipitated into the river—was whirled over, almost within reach of my hand, fluttering in vain the sinewy wings that had once borne him among the stars. Then came an ox, and a bear;—a horse, whose scream was to the heart as sickening as death; and a dog, who, as he passed, yelped—yes, even from the brink of the fall, yelped to me for succour. *To me!*—to me who was myself so helpless and lost! I laughed a bitter laugh of derision and despair.

“By and by, a log was whirled down the rapid, and among the rocks. It lodged against the rock nearest my own—that which I would have given worlds but to reach—and the free end, swinging in the current, struck against my little island, and ground its way by. Was not this a bridge offered

me by Heaven, which had, at last, heard my supplications? Frantic with excitement, with mingled hope and fear, I snatched at the log, to drag it athwart my rock, hoping the very violence of the current would keep it securely lodged betwixt the two. I might as well have attempted to arrest a thunderbolt in its flight. I seized it, indeed, but its momentum was irresistible; and with a tremendous jerk, it both freed itself from my grasp and dashed me from my rock over the fall. Yes, over the fall; but! God be praised, my hands were able to clutch upon the rock, from which I hung suspended betwixt the heaven above and the hell beneath, swinging in the gusts and in the waters, which, on either side, washed my feet, falling upon them as with the weight of mountains.

“ What was all I had suffered before, compared with the agonies of that moment, thus hanging, and every moment about to fall? I endeavoured to plant my feet on the broken face of the rock, and, in this way, clamber again to its top: there were crannies and ridges enough, but rotted by the water and frosts, and they broke under my feet. My efforts only served the purpose of digging away the foundations of the rock, and thus

expediting the moment of my fall. I threw all my strength into my arms, and, with a prodigious effort, succeeded—yes, succeeded in again placing myself upon the rock, where I lay down upon my face and laughed with joy.

“Then came the tempest, the rushing wind, the roaring thunder, the blinding lightning. What horrible loveliness now sat upon the scene! Was not this *more* than sublime? more than terrific? Now the descending waters were veiled in impenetrable darkness, in a blackness as of death and chaos; and anon the red bolt, the levin-rocket bursting from the cloud, glared into the darkest nooks of the abyss, revealing and adorning them with a ghastly splendour. Add to this the thunder rattling in rivalry with the roaring flood; and you have Niagara, seen at midnight, by the torches of Heaven—fit lights for a spectacle so grand and stupendous.

“It was a spectacle too magnificent to be lost by the visitors of Niagara, who came trooping down to the Table Rock; where, at every blaze of the lightning, I could see them clustered, expressing by their gestures their admiration and delight. I saw them so distinctly at times, that I thought it not impos-

sible they also might see me; and accordingly I rose again to my feet, forgetting, or defying, the winds, and doing every thing in my power to attract their attention.

“ I succeeded; some one at last beheld me: I knew it by the agitation immediately visible among the crowd, all eyes being now turned in one direction—to the rock on which I stood—I, the lost and the wretched! The tears rushed to my eyes: I did not expect them to help me—I knew they could not; but they pitied me; I should have, at least, some sympathizing fellow creature to see me die.

“ The agitation increased; lights were brought, and flashed to and fro; I saw torches upon the path leading down to the ferry—torches even upon the water. What! they were crossing the river? The people of my own side would then know of my fate; and they—yes, *they* might assist me! They could reach Goat Island—they could come out upon the rocks—they could throw bridges over those rocks that were otherwise inaccessible! My heart leaped in my bosom: I should yet be saved!

“ I looked to Goat Island; yet looked long in vain. Was I deceived? Alas! that agitation, those lights descending the rocks and

crossing the river; were there not a hundred causes to explain them, without reference to me? My hopes sunk, and I with them to my rock—Heaven and earth! the water was already rising upon it! Yes, the river was swelling, swelling fast, and my treacherous rock was vanishing under my feet!"

A NIGHT
ON THE
TERRAPIN ROCKS.

CHAPTER IV.

“ At that moment, a light gleamed from Goat Island, and I heard—Was it fancy?—a halloo. Another light shone, followed by another, and another; and the flash of lightning disclosed a dozen men upon the bank. The same bright glare exhibited me, also, to them, and they set up a great shout that was no longer to be mistaken for a noise made by the winds or waters: it came distinctly to my ears; and I saw my friends run down the bank towards the rocks, waving their torches and their hands, as if to bid me be of good cheer.

“ My transports were inexpressible, as I beheld them, some picking their way from rock to rock, advancing as near to me as they could, while others seemed to remain on the

island only to prepare the means for securing a still nearer approach. They were gathering logs to make bridges—knotting ropes together to float, or throw, to me—nay, I knew not what they were doing; but I knew they were doing every thing they could, toiling, every man, with generous zeal; and all of them, when the lightning discovered me standing with outstretched hands, bursting into shouts meant to encourage and animate my spirits.

“But the good work proceeded slowly; they advanced but a little way on the rocks, when the boiling currents brought them to a pause. A log was brought, and one step further secured; and then another pause. I saw, there was doubt, and wavering, and confusion among them, and cried aloud to them not to desert me. Another log was brought and thrown over the chasm that arrested them: it bent, shook, and was half whelmed in the torrent, and they—yes, it was plain to me—they feared to tread it! One man, at last, a noble creature, stirred by the piercing cries which I now uttered, dreading lest they should give over their exertions in despair, attempted the passage of the log—reached its middle, staggered—and then fell into the flood. A dismal

shriek burst from his companions—But he was not lost! A rope had been previously fastened around his body; and with this they snatched him from the death he had so intrepidly dared for me.

“ This perilous adventure seemed to strike them all with dread. The confusion and wavering among them became still more manifest: some crept back to the island; others pointed to the river rolling down increased and still growing floods; and others again looked up to the clouds, which were blacker and fiercer than ever. They uttered no more shouts, they offered no longer encouraging gestures. It was plain, they were abandoning me to my fate, or resolved to wait for further assistance; when every moment of delay was to me full of danger. The floods were already high upon my rock, and still rising. Another hour, a half hour—perhaps but a few moments—and assistance must come to me too late. They knew this; yet they were leaving me—yes, it was plain they were leaving me !

“ I grew frantic at the thought; and, ungrateful for what they had already done, invoked curses upon them for failing in what they could not do.

“ Did my execrations reach their ears? As they turned to depart, a single figure detached itself from the group, ran across the log which had so nearly caused the death of the former adventurer, and then, with such tremendous leaps as I never thought mortal man could make, and with a courage that seemed to laugh all perils to scorn, sprang from rock to rock, and at last stood at my side!—Will you not fancy despair had driven me mad, and that what I now saw and heard was the dream of a mind overcome by sudden insanity? I saw, then—no man—but an infernal fiend standing at my side, who said to me,—‘ Be thou my servant, and I will set thee upon dry land.’ And as he spoke, I felt my rock trembling and sinking under my feet. What will not a man not do for life? ‘ I will be thy servant,’ I cried. With that, he laughed the laugh of a devil in my face, and struck the rock with his foot; and down I sank to perdition. He struck the rock with his foot; or was it a thunder-bolt that smote it, crushing it away like an arch of sand? It melted from beneath me, and down I sank—down, down into the abyss; and the waters fell upon me like a mountain, crushing, drowning, suffocating; and I—and I—” The nar-

rator paused a moment, wiped the sweat-drops from his forehead, and then laying his hand upon a mossy bank beside him, continued, —“I found myself flying on this identical bank, a fragment of my boat beside me, the rest of it emerging from the water below that log,” (pointing to the little bridge to the islet) “against which it had struck and been broken, and hurrying off to the cataract at the rate of sixty miles an hour!”

I looked at the stranger in astonishment, perhaps also with indignation; for his story had taken deep hold on my feelings: but I saw in him nothing to justify a suspicion that he was amusing himself at my expense. On the contrary, his appearance indicated deep earnestness and deep emotion; and he was manifestly struggling to shake off the effects of a harrowing recollection. But the affair was a mystery I desired to penetrate; and I exclaimed, somewhat hastily, and, indeed, with no little simplicity—

“And so, sir, I am to understand, you were not upon that rock at all?”

“Certainly,” he replied; “I never was on that rock in my life, and, please Heaven, I never shall be. But, sir”—and here he summoned a faint smile, and again wiped his

brows—"you do not, I believe, entirely conceive me. I tell you what was partly an adventure, and partly a dream. It is true, that I fell asleep in my boat—that my boat broke her moorings and drifted into the rapids; and it is also true, that, while thus drifting towards destruction, I *dreamed* all I have told you—the cries from the shore—the toss from the boat, and the swim to the rock—the appearance of the people upon Table Rock and Goat Island, the demon and all—that I dreamed this, while thus floating. But in reality, while I was thus pleasantly engaged, my boat drifted into the channel here before us, and struck that bridge-log with a violence which both dispersed my dream and saved my life, by hurling me ashore.

"This is my whole story. You are surprised, perhaps, that I made so much ado of my dream, and so little of the real adventure. But in truth, sir, I know nothing of the real adventure, except that I fell asleep in my boat and was thrown ashore on Goat Island—Remember, I was asleep all the time. The dream is, to me, the real adventure, after all; for it had, and still has, upon my mind, all the force of reality. You observe, that I look upon this foaming channel before us—upon

that log, which if I had gone over or under, I must have perished, with little or no emotion; while, on the contrary, the sight of the rock, the scene of imaginary perils and sufferings, affects me in the strongest manner. Truly, the dream, the dream's the thing, that, with me, constitutes the soul of the adventure; and I tell you it, not so much to surprise you with its singularity, as to add one illustration to the many you have yourself, perhaps, gathered, of the power of the imagination in striking into the heart impressions deeper and more abiding than have been imprinted by the touch of reality. One may understand the incurable hallucinations of madness, who will remember the influence of a dream."

I thanked the gentleman for his story and explanation; and, after some hesitation, begged to know what construction he put upon his compact with the juggling fiend.

"Why, hang him, as he did not comply with his engagement to place me on dry land, (as was natural enough for a devil,) I consider the contract as broken, and my bond of servitude cancelled," the stranger replied, laughing; but added, a little more seriously—"I lay the thing to heart, notwithstanding.

A man may be shown, even in a dream, the true infirmity of his character—the flimsiness of his virtue, the weakness of his courage. In the daylight, we are all actors—actors even to ourselves: it is only in sleep we can remove the mask, and look upon ourselves as heaven made us.

“But, *morbleu!* the tavern-bell rings. Let us leave cold water and philosophy, and go to dinner.”

THE
MAMMOTH CAVE.

CHAPTER I.

THE WONDERS OF THE CAVE WORLD:—ELDON HOLE—PIT OF FREDERICKSHALL—GROT OF ST. MICHAEL—CAVE OF SAMARANG—BED OF THE RIO DEL NORTE—TIPPERARY CAVE—CAVE OF THE GUACHARO—FLAMING CAVES OF CUMANACOA—SUNSHINE CAVE—CAVERN IN DAUPHINY—DEVIL'S WIGWAM—CAVE OF THE PETRIFIED MEN IN TENNESSEE.

CAVES—the world of rock-ribbed darkness under our feet—have always formed a subject on which my imagination delighted to dwell; and to this day, the name seldom falls upon my ears without conjuring up a thousand grimly captivating associations—thoughts of the wild and supernatural, the strange and terrific—which are the more enticing for being so unlike the usual phantasms of a day-dream existence. To my boyish

conceits, Epimenides gathering wisdom in a brown study of fifty years in the cavern of Crete, was a much wiser personage than the other seven sages of Greece, who merely hunted for truth at the bottom of a well; while Bassus, the Carthaginian, digging, with a Roman army, for the lost treasure-cave of queen Dido,* was a greater hero than the mightiest Julius wading in blood at Pharsalia. For the same reason, if the truth must be told, I even held that the dark Hades—the *inamabile regnum*, as Tisiphone so emphatically called it—the domain of Pluto, which, as every body knows, was only to be reached

* V. *Tacit.*, l. xvi, c. 1, et seq.—This wonderful cavern, which, according to the representations of Bassus, made to the emperor Nero, was upon his own estate, near Carthage, he declared, “contained immense stores of gold not wrought into the form of coin, but in rude and shapeless ingots, such as were in use in the early ages of the world. In one part of the cave were to be seen massy heaps, and in other places columns of gold towering to a prodigious height; the whole an immense treasure, reserved in obscurity to add to the splendour of Nero’s reign.”

The effect of this crackbrained schemer’s representations was not confined to the emperor, who despatched him to Africa in state to fetch the buried treasure, but was felt by the whole Roman people. “No other subject,” says Tacitus, “was talked of;” and during the quinquennial games, it was “the theme on which the orators expatiated, and the poets exhausted their invention.” It was the “Mississippi Scheme” of the day.

through the dismal antres of Cumæ and Tænarus, was a decidedly more interesting habitation for curious spirits than even the sun-lit and privileged tops of Olympus. The Troglodytes were my beau ideal of a sensible and happy nation.

Some tincture of my own peculiar propensity, however, I think may be traced in the mind of the world at large. It is certain, there are few subjects on which men have given, and still continue to give, a greater loose to their imaginations than that of caves. The time has indeed gone by when they believed that devils and condemned souls had their appointed place within the hollows of the earth, accessible, even to mortal foot, through each cavern, each *alta spelunca* that yawned on its surface; the Pythium no longer breathes its oraculous vapour; the cave of Trophonius whispers no more the secrets of fate; and even the modern hags of the broomstick, that once

“Plied in cayes, th’ unutterable trade,”

and the fairy Gnomes that

“Dug the mine and wrought the ore,”

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are no longer expected to be found quiring around the infernal caldron, or dancing amid their heaps of gleaming treasure. But if Truth—the murderer of Fancy—has been at work on the classic mythos and the Gothic fable, she has still left us enough to wonder at in the world below; she has robbed it of the supernatural, but not of the marvellous. The *Mundus Subterraneus* of old father Kircher, however exploded in most of its particulars, among scientific men, contains nothing too incredible for the mass of mankind. Fortunately, as it happens, for the good old Jesuit's sake, as well as mankind's, there are, as far as mere caves are concerned, so many wonders already established as undoubted facts, that a man may be pardoned for believing almost any thing.—But let us glance at some of these authenticated marvels. They will form a proper introduction to the subject of the present description—the limestone Pandemonium, with which I desire to make the reader acquainted. A *propylon* of wonders becomes the Mammoth Cave, and should lead the way up to its gaping door, as rows of sphinxes conduct the traveller to the front of an Egyptian temple.

The famous Eldon Hole of Derbyshire

(who has not heard of the Eldon Hole?) has been sounded with a plummet-line of nearly ten thousand feet in length—that is, within but a little of *two miles*—without reaching the bottom; and the Pit of Fredericshall, in Norway, it is inferred from the number of seconds a stone consumes in reaching the bottom, must be *more* than two miles in depth. Whether the sound of a falling stone, reverberating through a tube even smoother than than we can fancy the pit of Fredericshall to be, could be actually heard at the depth of eleven thousand feet, I leave to be conjectured; but I may aver, in reference to the Eldon Hole, which was really sounded by a line to the depth mentioned, that if the doctrine of internal fire, resuscitated by modern Vulcanists, be true, and the scale of increasing temperatures adopted by them be just, there ought to ascend from this same convenient flue, heat enough to warm all Derbyshire. The internal heat of the earth is said by philosophers to increase 1° Fahrenheit, for every 100 feet of descent. If the mouth of Eldon Hole were on a level with the general surface of the earth, the bottom ought to be at a temperature 100° above the mean temperature (say 50°) at the surface.

Two miles under ground ! With these facts in view, who shall quarrel with his neighbour for believing, as many a man does, that he has eaten his dinner, in the Mammoth Cave, under the bed of Green River ? or with the monkeys of Gibraltar for having made their way from Africa to Europe, as every body knows they must have done, *via* the Grot of St. Michael, under the foundations of the Méditerranean ?

The *extent* of caves is a subject upon which men are still more inclined to be glorious. But here we have facts enough on record to countenance any stretch of magniloquence; besides *opinions*, which, as the world goes, have, in general, with mankind, all the weight and consequence of facts. Thus, the people of Java are of opinion that the sacred cave of Samarang affords a submarine passage from their island to Canton, in China—a distance of somewhat more than *two thousand* miles, traced in a line as straight as could be winged by an albatross. But leaving opinions, let us refer to a fact of philosophic celebrity, which, besides being quite a settler of all difficulties, possesses some peculiar features of interest. In the year 1752, the Rio del Norte, one of the greatest rivers

of America, (its length is reckoned at full two thousand miles,) suddenly sank into the earth, leaving its bed dry for a space of fifty leagues; and in this condition it remained several weeks, the waters flowing into some subterranean abyss, which it required them so long a time to fill. Allowing the river at the Paso del Norte, where the incident occurred, to be but a quarter-mile wide, and its depth but five feet, with a current of two miles the hour, and supposing it continued to sink into the earth during two weeks, we can give a pretty shrewd guess at the extent and capacity of the cavern in which it was swallowed up. According to my calculations, to dispose of such a body of water, would have demanded a cave one hundred feet wide and high, and just five hundred miles long! Nor must this statement, however lightly made, be considered absurd. Let it be remembered that the channel of the river for a space of fifty leagues, was absolutely robbed of its waters. Supposing their disappearance had been only momentary, it is easy to perceive, the abyss that received them must have been vaster than we can readily figure to our imaginations.

After this, no one need doubt the veracity

of those travellers who relate their moderate rambles of “twenty miles or thereabouts” in the great caves of the West. No one need even be astounded at the grandeur of that renowned cave of Tipperary, discovered in 1833, with its chambers—“wider than angels ken”—one “nearly a mile in circumference,” another “of about three miles in circumference”—so paddywhackishly described by an enthusiastic correspondent of the Tipperary Free Press; though, sorry we are to confess, in the hands of a malicious surveyor, the hall of a mile in circumference is said to have suddenly shrunk into a room of ninety feet by one hundred and fifty, and that of three miles into one of one hundred feet by just two hundred and fifty. This is a climax somewhat similar to that of the story of the seventy cats—“*our cat and another one!*” But what if it be? There is

“Something yet left remarkable
Beneath the visiting moon:”

The wonders of the cave-world are not yet exhausted.

Let us accompany Humboldt, the profoundest of chorographers, the most veracious

of travellers, to the cave of the Guacharo, among the mountains of Cumana, in South America. It opens on the face of a precipice, a grand abyss seventy-seven feet high and eighty-five wide. A river, born of darkness and night, like many of the streams of Carniola, rolls from its mouth; while festoons of creeping plants, the ivies of the tropics, hanging from the rocks above, and glittering with flowers of every gorgeous dye, swing across the chasm like so many boa-constrictors on the watch for prey. A grove of palms and ceibas—the tropical cotton-wood—rises tall and verdant at the very entrance, with birds singing, and monkeys chattering, among the boughs. Through this grove you enter the cave; and in this grove you continue, even when the world of sunshine has been left some distance behind. The palms still lift their majestic tops, and the ceibas rub their green heads against the rocky roof; whilst flowers—the heliconia, the dragon-root, and others—bloom under your feet. The palms and ceibas at last cease to appear; but not so the flowers. As far as man has penetrated—a distance of more than a quarter of a mile—you still see them growing, and all in darkness; on the hill of the cascade

(for a hill there is, and a cascade too,) and beyond, you find them flourishing among pillars of stalactite, as pale, as sepulchral, as fantastic, yet as beautiful, as the growth of spar around them. One might here dream of the grove of Aladdin, with its trees bearing fruits of diamond and ruby, of sapphire and emerald; and the more especially as every rub of your iron lamp against a spar calls up before your affrighted eyes a thousand horrible genii—not the mighty sons of Eblis indeed, but black and dismal *guacharos*, birds bigger than our northern screech-owls—that with fluttering wing and thrilling shriek, repel the invader of their enchanted abode. Compared with such a subterraneous elysium, the garden discovered by Don Quixotte, in his memorable exploration of the cave of Montesinos, *el mas bello, ameno y deleitoso que puede criar la naturaleza*—the most beautiful and delightful that nature ever made—is but a kitchen garden.

But what is even the cave of the Guacharo to the Flaming Caves of Cumanacoa—two wonders of nature hidden among the same mountains? In the face of a tremendous precipice looking over the savage woods that skirt the mountain below, are two immense

holes, visible at a great distance, even in the day-time. But it is at night that they are seen to the best advantage; and then, if his star be propitious, if the Indian Cyclopes in the bowels of the Cerro start from their slumbers to renew their oft interrupted toil at forge and bellows, the traveller, leaping from his own uneasy couch, beholds with amazement the mouths of the caverns lighted up with flames; he sees, high on the sable cliff, two mighty disks of fire that glare upon him from afar, like the eyes of some crouching monster—a tiger-cat as big as a *Cordillera*—or those more portentous orbs that might have blazed under the brows of the arch-enemy, when he

“ Dilated stood
Like Teneriffe or Atlas,”

the Quinbus Flestryn of demons. The Indians and Creoles that take to their heels at the first shriek of the *guacharos*, could be scarcely expected to brave the terrors of the Flaming Caves. The thick forests at the base of the cliffs are, besides, the haunts of innumerable jaguars—creatures that think little of shouldering a bullock in the midst of

the herd, and tramping victorious off, and would, of course, think still less of swallowing a herdsman who should come in their way. Hence, as it happens, mortal man has not yet disturbed the solitude, or explored the wonders of the Flaming Caves, which he is content to admire at the distance that lends safety, as well as enchantment, to the view.

Of an equally, perhaps of a still more, wonderful character is another cave of South America—in Peru or Bolivia, I think—of which I once read, though I cannot now tell where to lay my hands on it, that gapes on a mountain side, as black and gloomy as cave may be, until the close of the day; when, the shades of the mountain having fallen over it, and over every thing else in the neighbourhood, on a sudden, warm *sunshine* gushes from its jaws, lights up the objects around, smiles, trembles, fades, and then expires. This must be the entrance to the Elysium of the American races—the Happy Hunting Grounds, which all the tribes, savage and civilized together, believe the Master of Life has prepared for the souls of the brave and just. But, unfortunately, no Humboldt has yet visited the spot, and we know no more of it than I have mentioned. Within its un-

known chambers we should perhaps find such Hesperian Gardens and Elysian Fields as must leave even the cave of the Guacharo in the shade—crystal wildernesses, overgrown with phosphorescent *cryptogamiae*—those luminous plants, which, in the coal-mines of Dresden, and some other places, hanging in festoons from the roof and pillars, and stretching in tapestry along the walls, diffuse a glorious lustre on all around; until the visiter, amazed and delighted, fancies himself in the palace of the Fairy Queen, or a cavern dug out of moonlight. The South American cave, to whatever cause it may owe its resplendent emanation, is, undoubtedly, a great wonder; but the rocks of the Nile and the Orinoco exhale *music*—why should not others breathe sunshine?

According to old Mezeray (or rather, according to some of those philosophers who quote him, for I myself could never light upon the page that records the marvel,) there is a cavern in Dauphiny, near Grenoble, famous as the seat of a subterraneous Erie and Niagara, famous also for the exploring voyage performed in it, in his youth, by Francis I, in royal person. At a considerable distance from the entrance was a sheet of water of

unknown bounds, which had previously arrested the steps of all visitants. But what shall restrain the curiosity of a king? A barge was constructed, illuminated with hundreds of flambeaux, and launched into the flood; into which the gallant Francis, attended by a party of his bravest courtiers, struck boldly out, the Columbus of the caverned deep —taking good care, however, to leave a huge beacon-fire blazing behind him on the rocky beach, to secure his safe return. A voyage of three miles (*cave-distance*, be it recollected,) conducted the royal adventurer to the opposite shores of the ocean; whence having landed, and, I suppose, taken possession in the usual style of discoverers, he turned his prow in another direction, determined to fathom all the mysteries of the lake. By and by, an experienced boatman declared the barge was no longer floating on a stagnant lake, but in a current that was perceptibly increasing in strength; and a courtier called the attention of the monarch to a hollow noise heard in the distance, which, like the current, was every moment growing stronger —nay, even swelling into horrific thunder. The navigators rested on their oars, while a plank, to which several flaming torches were

tied, was committed to the water. It floated rapidly away, became agitated, tossed up and down, and finally pitched down the unknown cataract, to which the rival of Charles V. was so ignorantly hastening. "Back oars!" was then the cry; and all rowing for their lives, the monarch had the good fortune to regain his beacon, and the upper air, with which, it appears, he remained content for the rest of his life.

A singular story was formerly told of a cave in Upper Canada, in the ridge that bounds the western shore of Ontario, from which it was but seven or eight miles removed. It bore the awe-inspiring title of the Devil's Wigwam—*Manito Wigwam*—so called by the Indians, who seemed very devoutly to believe that the father of lies had there established his head-quarters. (Had they put him in the Irish cave, previously described, the residence would have been more appropriate.) The Manito-Wigwam was reported to be of vast depth, consisting of several terraces separated one from another by precipices of more than a hundred feet perpendicular pitch, the last terminating in a fathomless gulf, into which no human being had ever endeavoured to penetrate. From this cavern,

once a week, issued a terrific din, an earthquake-like explosion, of such force as to shake the hills for five leagues around. The Manito-Wigwam was therefore a very wonderful cave. I say *was*, for I know not whether it is now in existence. The same enterprizing spirit which has converted Niagara into a mill-pond, might as easily have modified the Devil's Wigwam into a hole for storing winter potatoes.

To this catalogue of wonderful caverns, which I might easily swell to greater length, it would be unpardonable not to add a notice of the marvellous one discovered a year or two since by two scientific gentlemen of Philadelphia, in one of the mountain counties of East Tennessee; in which they lighted upon the petrified bodies of two men and a dog, of races manifestly older by many thousand years than the men and dogs of the present day. Those venerable remains it was said to be the intention of the discoverers to remove from their rocky dwelling to the more appropriate shelves of a museum, to take their places among mummied moderns of the time of Pharaoh, and divide with Javanese dragons and mermaids the admiration of a discerning public. It does not, how-

ever, appear that these petrified ancients have yet left their cavern, not so much as a finger having been received in any museum in the land; a circumstance that can only be accounted for by the ingenious and veracious editor, to whom the public owes the first notice of the discovery.

THE
MAMMOTH CAVE.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAMMOTH CAVE: ITS EXTENT—CAVES OF KENTUCKY—THE BARRENS—BULL, THE DOG—CAVE-HOLLOW—MOUTH OF THE MAMMOTH CAVE.

AMONG so many wonders and prodigies, the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, it may be supposed, must sink into insignificance. It reveals no subterranean gardens, no Stygian lakes, no stupendous waterfalls; it discharges no volcanic flames, it emits no phosphoric sunlight; it contains no petrified pre-Adamites, and no hollow thunders are heard resounding among its dreary halls. It is not two miles deep; it is not five hundred miles long—nay, it can no longer boast even the twenty miles of extent, which formerly contributed so much to its glory. The surveyor has been among its vaults; he has stretched his chain along its galleries, he has broken the heart of its mystery, and, with cruel scale and protractor,

he has laid it down upon paper. He has illustrated the truly remarkable fact, which none but the most cold-blooded of philosophers were ever before inclined to suspect—namely, that when you would know the true extent of any antre vast in which you have journeyed, the admiring of all admirers, you should first take the shortest extent you can possibly believe it to be, and then divide that length by the sum total of your thumbs and fingers, being satisfied that, if the answer be not exactly right, it will be extremely near it. Thus Weyer's cave in Virginia—the Antiparos of the Ancient Dominion, one of the loveliest grots that fairy ever, or never, danced in—was, until recently surveyed, pretty universally considered as being full three miles in length. By the rule above, we should bring its true extent down to between five and six hundred yards; a result that very closely coincides with the ad-measurement of the surveyor. By the same rule, we should reduce the Mammoth Cave to two miles; which comes but little short of the truth. Nevertheless, the Mammoth Cave is still the monarch of caves: none that have ever been measured can at all compare with it, even in extent; in grandeur, in wild,

solemn, severe, unadorned majesty, it stands entirely alone. “It has no brother, it is like no brother.”

What I have said of the length of this cave, it must be observed, applies only to a single passage. It is a labyrinth of branches, of which the principal one is two miles and a half long. There are two or three others of nearly half that length. The extent of all the passages, taken together, is between eight and nine miles. There are, besides, many which have never been explored, and perhaps never will be—some opening in the sides, and at the bottoms, of pits that would appal a samphire-gatherer or an Orkney fowler; others, of which there are countless numbers, opening by orifices so narrow that nothing but blasting with gunpowder can ever render them practicable; and perhaps as many more, accessible and convenient enough, but whose entrances, concealed among rocks and crannies, no lucky accident has yet discovered. The Deserted Chambers, forming a considerable portion of the whole cave, and now accessible through two different approaches, have only been known for a comparatively brief number of years; and the Solitary Cave, with its groves of spar, its

pools, and springs, and hollow-sounding floors, is a still more recent discovery.

The survey of the cave, as far as it is now known, we owe to Mr. Edmund F. Lee, an engineer of Cincinnati, who has executed his task with skill and fidelity. The difficulties, labours—I might even say, the dangers—of his enterprise (in which he was occupied, I believe, three or four months—the whole winter of 1834-5,) can only be appreciated by those who are familiarly acquainted with the cave. The exploit of surveying and levelling eight or nine miles of cavern appears to me unprecedented. Mr. Lee's Map, with the libretto of "Notes" accompanying it, published in Cincinnati by James and Gazlay, interesting alike to the lovers of romance and of science, is a curious and valuable production, which I cordially recommend to my readers and the public.

The Mammoth Cave lies upon Green River, in a corner of Edmonson county, Kentucky, in the heart of the district long known as the Barrens—a vast extent of rolling hills and knobs, once bare and naked—prairies, in fact, as they were sometimes called—but now overshadowed by a young forest of black-jacks and other trees that delight in an arid

soil. The whole country is one bed of limestone, with as many caverns below as there are hills above, both seeming to have been formed at the same moment, and by the same cause—some primeval convulsion by which the rocky substratum was torn to pieces, and the knobs heaped up. That earthquakes had something to do in carving out the caves of the West, no one will doubt who has clambered among those prodigious blocks of stone—masses which to move would have puzzled a Pelasgian builder of old—that lie strewn about the floors of the Mammoth Cave, shivered from the roofs and walls by some violent concussion. The earthquakes that formed them, seem however, not always to have opened the ragged fissures to the air: that was left to another agency—the infiltration, in most instances, of water, by which the thinner and weaker portions of the crust were gradually disintegrated, and finally swept into the interior. The Mammoth Cave itself was evidently opened in this way, in remote times, after remaining sealed up for a long series of centuries; and in this case, as in most others, the mass of falling rocks, sinking across a spacious excavation, has been sufficient to block it up in one direction,

while yielding easy access in the other. The Horse-shoe Cave, however, a grotto twelve or fifteen miles distant from the Mammoth — is an instance in which the roof has fallen, without obstructing the passage on either side: you enter the cave, as it were, by a side door, and may penetrate with equal ease to the right hand or the left. In many cases, there seem to exist caverns with no roof of rock at all, the fissure having extended to the top of the limestone, where it is covered over only by a thin layer of soil. It is not altogether an uncommon thing for a traveller in Kentucky to play the Curtius, and plunge, horse and man, into the bowels of the earth at a moment when he feels neither patriotic nor heroical, but very much like any other mortal. It was but two years ago that a gentleman of Lexington, ambling over his fields, in the neighbourhood of that city, surveying his stacks of hemp, and speculating perhaps, like a philanthropist, upon the number of rascals his crop might be expected to hang, suddenly found himself sinking into the earth, whirling in a Maelstrom of clay and stones; from which, however, he succeeded in extricating himself by leapiug briskly from his horse. The animal sank to a depth of

one hundred and fifty feet, where he became wedged between two rocks, the sides of a cavern, and perished. A similar accident happened in the Barrens of which I speak, as early as 1795, when a planter of West Tennessee lost his horse, and saved himself, in the same way; only, that on this occasion, the animal tumbled into a more spacious cavern, in which he walked about until starved to death.

But let us hasten to the cave. It is mid-summer. It was at that season, several years ago, I made my first (it was not my only) visit to the cave. It was the close of merry June—merry, yet not merry, for the pestilence was then abroad in the land, and men were thinking and talking of nothing but cholera—when I, with an excellent friend, (alas! now no more,) who was as eager as myself to escape to some nook where cholera was unknown, where our ears should be no longer pained, nor our souls sickened by “every day’s report” of cases—made my way to the heart of the Barrens, and in good time, one bright morning, found myself approaching the Mammoth Cave. The air was hot upon the hill-tops, hotter still in the little valleys that, with their lowly cabins of logs, and

smiling, though half-cultivated corn-fields, presented here and there a few demi-oases in the desert of black-jacks, through which we were jogging: there was no breeze in the forest, but there was note of preparation among the white and sable-silvered clouds aloft, that now sent a heavy rain-drop pashing in our faces and now woke the woods with rattling peals of thunder. But what cared we for shower or bolt? We were vagabondizing among the knobs; and, by and by, we should be under the canopy of the cave, deep in vaults where the rain beats not and the thunder is never heard. We are even now riding over its labyrinthine halls: each of these rocky hills is arched over one of its gloomy vaults; and it is in a glen upon the side of the very knob, on whose flat, plain-like summit we are now coursing to our journey's end, we are to find its darksome portals. Under this mouldering stile of logs, where we leave our *Rozi-nantes*, rejoiced to escape their excruciating backs, under this venerable, rickety porch, where we pause a moment to look around, at a depth of a hundred feet below, is one of the hugest chambers of the cave. The guide prepares his iron torches, his bucket of oil—or, to speak less poetically, his bucket of lard,

(for here the fat of Leviathan is unknown,) and his basket of provisions; while we, exhorting him to despatch, set off to explore the mysteries of the glen, the redoubtable Cave-Hollow, ourselves.

But first let us seduce honest Bull, the great dog that has been wagging his tail at us in token of friendship, to lead us to the cavern. "You may get him into the Hollow," quoth the guide, nodding his head; "but you won't get him into the cave; because dogs are exactly the people that won't go in, no way you can fix it.—They have a horror of it."—Verily, after we had ourselves got in, and seen the last glimmer of fading daylight swallowed up in midnight gloom, we began to think Bull's discretion not so very extraordinary. There actually *is* a point at which dogs begin to think of themselves in preference to their masters. I once saw a hulking cur, who boasted the same name Bull—as all big dogs, except Newfoundland ones, do—attempt to follow his master over the bridge above the falls of Niagara. It was a fine sunshiny day, and Bull, being in a joyous humour, had galloped a hundred yards or so along the bridge, without much thinking of where he was or whither going. But on a

sudden the idea struck his mind, or whatever part of him served for mind; he stopped, applied his nose to a crack in the planks, and made a dead set at the horrible green and white billows beneath. "Come on, Bull!" cried his master from afar. "If I do," said Bull, "I wish I may —;" not that he actually said so much in words, but it was written in his eye. His tail fell, his ears began to rise, he stole a sidelong look at the waters above and the waters below; and planted himself in the centre of the bridge, from which he refused to budge, except upon hard jostling, even to let myself get by. His master called again and again; and I believe Bull made some small effort to advance, stepping slowly and carefully forward, as if treading upon eggs. He did not, however, proceed far; and when I saw him last, he had come to a second stand, and was again surveying the boiling surges through the gaps of the planks, looking volumes of mute terror and perplexity. How he ever got to firm land again I know not; for he was evidently as much afraid to return as to advance.

Were there indeed such horrors in the Mammoth Cave as should make a dog a coward on instinct? The thought sharpened

our expectations, and we were the more eager to make its acquaintance.

And now let us descend the Cave-Hollow—a ravine that begins a mere gully at first, but, widening and deepening as you proceed, becomes at last, on the banks of the river, half a mile to the west, a valley that might almost be called spacious. It is bounded by ledges of calcareous rock overlaid by sand-stone, which, in some places, assume the appearance of precipices, and, in others, are piled together in loose blocks. Along the line of wall thus bounding the valley, spring tall oak-trees and chestnuts, rooted among the rocks; while elms, and walnuts, maples and papaws, and a thousand other trees, with vines, weeds, brambles, and many a glaring wild-flower, occupy the depths of the hollow, shutting it out almost as much from the blue heaven above as its rocky walls seclude it from the habitable earth around. A brook that runs when the clouds run, and at no other period, has ploughed a rugged channel down one side of the glen; and along its banks or in its parched bed, as seems most convenient, we make our way, looking for the cave, which refuses to be found; hiding from the sun, which, however, neither the scudding

thunder-clouds nor the embowering tree-tops can wholly keep from our visages; and sighing for something to "allay the burning quality" of the atmosphere, some cool breeze stirred by the wing of Favonius from fountain-side or brim, some—But soft! we have our wish; a cool breeze does at last breathe over our cheeks; it rolls a gentle and invisible stream, a river of air, down the valley. On that grassy terrace above, we shall enjoy it. On that grassy terrace we step, and the cave yawns before us!—The breeze, at first so cool, and now so icy, comes from its marble jaws; it is the breath of the monster.

How dark, how dismal, how dreary! The platform sinks abruptly under your feet, forming a steep and broken declivity of thirty or more feet in descent, and as much in width. From the bottom of the abyss thus formed, springs an arch, whose top is on a level lower even than your feet, while the massive rock that crowns it is on a plane which you can still overlook. The cave is therefore under your feet; you look down upon it; it is subterraneous even at its entrance; and this is a circumstance which adds double solemnity and horror to its appearance. In other respects its aspect is haggard and ghastly in

the extreme. The gray rocks, consisting of thick horizontal plates, forming ledges and galleries along the sides; the long grasses, the nodding ferns, the green mosses and lichens, that have fastened among their crannies; the pit immediately under the spring of the arch, loosely choked with beams, planks, earth and stones; the stream of crystal water, oozing from the mosses on the face of the crowning rock, and falling with a wild patterning sound upon the ruins below; the dismal blackness of the vacuity, in which objects are obscurely traced only for a few fathoms; and the ever-breathing blast, so cold, so strange, so sepulchre-like; form together a picture of desolation and gloom inconceivably awful and repelling. Indeed, instances not unfrequently occur where visitors are so much overcome by its appearance, as to fall back upon their instincts, like honest Bull the dog, and refuse to enter it altogether. A singular addition is given to its dreariness by the presence of several mouldering beams of wood stretched across the mouth from ledge to ledge, and two tottering chimneys of stone, behind the cotton-wood tree on the right hand; the ruins of old saltpetre works, the manufacture of which villainous compound, in

the last war, was carried on to a great extent in the cave. But peace came, and with it those curses of trade, low prices, by which the manufacturers were scattered to the winds, and the Mammoth Cave again left to its solitude. But that is its proper condition. A city at Niagara, a factory in the Mammoth Cave, are consummations of enterprising ambition only to be hoped for by men whose hearts are of gold and silver, and their nerves and brains of the dross thereof.

How dark, how dismal, how dreary! One would think that no living creature, save man alone, the lover of romance and adventure, would willingly enter this horrible pit. Yet a swallow has built her nest under the grim arch; and as she darts with flashing wing through the thin waters of the falling brook, and turns gamesomely about, and darts through them again and again, her twittering cries are as full of jocund mirth as of music. What is it to her that all around is darkness, fear, and desolation? The chirping of her young from the shattered roof makes the cave her paradise. And that little lizard, striped with azure and scarlet, that dances around the trunk of the stunted crab-apple growing on the face of the descent—the most beautiful,

delicate, graceful, resplendent, mischievous little rascal my eyes ever beheld—he mocks me, but he will not let me catch him!—there is something here, though what I know not, to make the chill, moist entrance of the cave more delightful even to *him* than the gray, heated rocks above, where his comrades are basking. And yet the lizard and swallow are frisking at the mouth of a sepulchre. The nitre taken from this cave was dug from among the bones of buried Indians. If we can believe the account of those who should know best, many a generation of dead men sleeps among the vaults of the Mammoth Cave. Perhaps this thought, busy in the mind of the visiter, invests its aspect with a more awful solemnity than it really possesses.

THE
MAMMOTH CAVE.

CHAPTER III.

DESCENT INTO THE CAVE—THE NARROWS—THE BLAST OF CAVES—THUNDERSTORM—THE VESTIBULE.

BUT let us descend. The guide has arrived; the swinging torches are tied each to its staff, and lighted; our canteens are filled from the trough that receives the crystal brook, and all is ready for the subterranean journey. Enter the mighty portal—

Arch'd so high, that giants may jet through
And keep their impious turbands on, without
Good-morrow to

the gloom. How ragged and shivered is the broken roof above, as if those aforesaid giants with the “turbands” on had been employed to rough-hew the arch. But the floor is firm,

dry, smooth clay: so far we owe thanks to the nitre-diggers, who have constructed a path—it almost might be called a carriage-road—half a mile into the cave.

Over this path, ringing with sonorous clang to every footstep, facing full to the east—yet what an east! an Orient that never knew a dawn—the thunder roaring behind us, (for the storm has at last burst,) and the gust of the cave murmuring hollow in front, we trudge along; until, sixty paces from the dripping-spring, we find ourselves at the Narrows, where the roof is but seven or eight feet high, and the width of the cave not much greater. The passage has been still further contracted by a wall built up by the miners, leaving only a narrow door-way, that was formerly provided with a leaf to exclude the cold air of winter. Here, if the nervous visiter has not been appalled at the entrance, he will perhaps be dismayed by the furious blast rushing like a winter tempest through the door. Its strength is indeed astonishing. It deprives him of breath, and, what is worse, of light; the torches are blown out; they are relighted and again extinguished: we must grope our way through in the dark, and trust to flint and steel. It is done: once through

the narrow door, and the wind appals no longer. All is calm and still, a few feet within the wall; it is only at the contracted gap that we feel the fury of the current. In the winter, or at any other period of cold weather, the blast is reversed; the current is then inwards.

There are numerous caves in America, as well as in other parts of the world, which exhibit the phenomena of the *blast*; and this has usually been reckoned one of their chief wonders. It has given rise among philosophers to a deal of fanciful theory, which, perhaps, would never have been indulged in, had not observers in the first place mystified the whole subject by recording facts that only existed in their imagination. Thus, some caves are said to blow in and out, without much regard to the state of the weather, a wonder which was only to be explained by supposing the existence of intermitting fountains—that is, of vast pools alternately rising and falling, and so, by increasing or diminishing the space within, expelling or inhaling the air; while others again were reported to blow out perpetually—as in the case of the cave at the Panther Gap in Virginia, described by Mr. Jefferson. This cave Mr. Jefferson, I

think, could never have seen, as he describes it (in very loose terms, it must be confessed) as having an entrance “of about one hundred feet *diameter*,” whereas all travellers represent the outlet as being quite small. Allowing that he describes it on mere hear-say, we need attach no great weight to his assertion, that the current “is strongest in dry, *frosty* weather, and weakest in long spells of rain.” That it does blow in the summer is well ascertained; that it blows at all in winter, I feel strongly disposed to doubt, having heard that part of the story contradicted by a person residing in the neighbourhood of the Gap. Our opinion is, that *all* caves of any magnitude blow; that the blast becomes perceptible only when the outlet is very small; that it is in all caves alike—the blast being outward in hot, and inward in cold weather; and that to understand the mystery, nothing more is required than to place a candle in a door communicating betwixt a very warm and a very cold room, holding it first near the floor, when a cold current will be found rushing *into* the warm room, and then near the lintel, where a warm current will be found rushing *out*. In other words, we think that there is a double current flowing, Medi-

terranean-wise, at the mouth of every cave, and flowing always, except when the temperatures within and without are the same; a cold current at the bottom rushing out in summer, and *in* during the winter, and a warm one above flowing in the contrary direction, a perpetual circulation of air being thus kept up. This is an idea, which, being too simple and natural to be readily conceived, did not occur to us when it was in our power to verify or disprove it at the Mammoth Cave, as we had many opportunities to do. Our mind, in fact, on all such occasions, was engaged with a sublimer idea. We thought of musical strings—a great *Æolian* lyre—stretched across the door, and waked to majestic music by the breath of the cave—such solemn strains as were poured by the “ingenious instrument” of Belarius over the dying Imogen.

Bur we have passed the windy gap, and are in the cave, where all is silence and tranquillity. The thunder is still raving in the upper air, but its peals already come faintly to the ear: a few more steps and they will be inaudible. With a rock a hundred feet thick over our heads, we can defy their fury, and forget it. Armies of a hundred thousand

men might fight a Waterloo on the hills above, and we know nothing of it. At least, we should hear neither drum nor trumpet, nor sound of artillery; though cascades of blood, falling where we are to find only cascades of water, might impart the hideous secret. Our torches are relighted, making each

“A little glooming light, much like a shade,”

which we take care to direct to the sounding floor, to watch our footing, satisfied, after one or two eager efforts to penetrate the gloom that has now invested us, that nothing is to be seen until we have got out *cave eyes*. We catch, to be sure, a dim glance, now and then, of a low roof almost touching our heads, of two rugged walls that are ever and anon rude to our elbows; one of them—that is, one of the walls—the workmanship of Nature herself, though of Nature in no pains-taking mood, the other piled up on the left hand by the nitre-diggers of old, who were thus wont to dispose of the loose rocks that came in their way. You are sensible you are thriding a path as narrow as the road of Honour,—

“A strait so narrow,
Where one but goes abreast;”

and you begin to have your doubts whether the Mammoth Cave is, after all, all it has been represented to be. You get tired even of admiring the musical ringings of the guide's footsteps on the hard earthen floor; you are sure you have trudged a quarter of a mile already, (the guide assures you, half a mile,) along this dismal, low, narrow, stupid passage; you become impatient; you demand “if there is nothing better to be seen;” and the guide, answering by bidding you look to your footing—which, however, you are doing of your own accord, the path having suddenly become broken—at last directs you to pause, and look around.—What now do you see?

What now do we see? Midnight—the blackness of darkness—nothing! Where are we? where is the wall we were lately elbowing out of the way? It has vanished, it is lost; we are walled in by darkness, and darkness canopies us above. Look again; swing your torches aloft! Ay, now you can see it, far up, a hundred feet above your head, a gray ceiling rolling dimly away like a cloud; and heavy buttresses, bending under the weight, curling and toppling over their base, begin to

project their enormous masses from the shadowy wall. How vast, how solemn, how awful! And how silent, how dreadfully silent! The little bells of the brain are ringing in your ears; you hear nothing else, not even a sigh of air, not even the echo of a drop of water falling from the roof. The guide triumphs in your looks of amazement and awe, he takes advantage of your feelings all so solemn and romantic:—"Them that says the Mammoth ain't a rale tear-cat don't know nothing about it!"—

With which truly philosophic interjection, he falls to work on certain old wooden ruins, to you yet invisible, and builds a brace or two of fires; by the aid of which you begin to have a better conception of the scene around you. You are in the Vestibule, or ante-chamber, to which the spacious entrance of the cave and the narrow passage that succeeds it, should be considered the mere gateway and covered approach. It is a basilica of an oval figure, two hundred feet in length by one hundred and fifty wide, with a roof, which is as flat and level as if finished by the trowel of the plasterer, of fifty or sixty, or even more, feet in height. Two passages, each a hundred feet in width, open

into it at its opposite extremities, but in right angles to each other; and as they preserve a straight course for five or six hundred feet, with the same flat roof common to each, the appearance to the eye is that of a vast hall in shape of the letter L, expanded at the angle, both branches being five hundred feet long by a hundred wide. The passage on the right hand is the Great Bat Room; that in front, the beginning of the Grand Gallery, or the main cavern itself. The whole of this prodigious space is covered by a single rock, in which the eye can detect no break or interruption, save at its borders, where is a broad sweeping cornice, traced in horizontal panel-work, exceedingly noble and regular; and not a single pier or pillar of any kind contributes to support it. It needs no support; it is like the arched and ponderous roof of the poet's mausoleum,

“By its own weight made steadfast and immovable.”

The floor is very irregularly broken, consisting of vast heaps of the nitrous earth, and of the ruins of the hoppers, or vats, composed of heavy planking, in which the miners were accustomed to leach it. This hall was, in

fact, one of their chief factory rooms. Before their day, it was a cemetery; and here they disinterred many a mouldering skeleton, belonging, it seems, to that gigantic eight or nine feet race of men of past days, whose jaw-bones so many thousand veracious persons have clapped over their own, like horse-collars, without laying by a single one to convince the soul of scepticism.

Such is the Vestibule of the Mammoth Cave—a hall which hundreds of visitors have passed through without being conscious of its existence. The path leading into the Grand Gallery hugs the wall on the left hand, and is, besides, in a hollow, flanked on the right hand by lofty mounds of earth, which the visiter, if he looks at them at all, as he will scarcely do at so early a period after entering, will readily suppose to be the opposite walls. Those who enter the Bat Rooms —into which flying visitors are seldom conducted—will indeed have some faint suspicion, for a moment, that they are passing through infinite space; but the walls of the cave being so dark as not to reflect one single ray of light from the dim torches, and a greater number of them being necessary to disperse the gloom than are usually employed, they

will still remain in ignorance of the grandeur around them. In an attempt which we made to secure a drawing of the Vestibule, we had it lighted up with a dozen or more torches and flambeaux, and two or three bonfires beside; but still the obscurity was so great that it was necessary, in sketching any one part, to have the torches for the time held before it. It was, in fact, impossible to light it up so as to embrace all its striking features in one view. We saw enough of it, however, to determine its quality. It possesses not one particle of beauty; but its grandeur, its air of desolation combined with majesty, are unspeakably impressive.

THE
MAMMOTH CAVE.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BAT ROOMS—THE CREVICE PIT—TRAGEDY OF
THE PIT CAVE.

BUT let us enter the Bat Rooms—the Big Bat room and the Little one—the latter being a narrow branch of the former, remarkable only for its two pits, one of which, the Crevice Pit, is the deepest that has been measured in the whole cave.

The Big Bat Room is about one third of a mile long, counting from its entrance, which is not half a mile as is generally supposed, but just three hundred yards from the mouth of the cave. It is interesting only from its width and height, which it preserves nearly to the end unimpaired. It terminates in mounds of massive sandstone, that, with the assistance of water ever dripping through

them, have crushed in the roof, leaving a shadowy dome above them. The Little Bat Room opens in its left wall, six or seven hundred feet from the Vestibule. It is long, winding, low, and deep; and was once the bed of a torrent that has worn its walls into a thousand figures, with numerous winding holes which lead perhaps into other caverns, but are too small to be entered. It is now dry, like other parts of the cave, and blackened by age, or by the smoke of the torches of the ancient inhabitants of the cave and the miners. Within but a few feet of its extremity, there are two low-browed niches, one in each wall, nearly opposite each other, the blackest, ugliest looking places in the whole world, particularly that on the left hand, which is a hundred times blacker and uglier than the other. One feels an instinctive horror of this place at the very first look, and perceives a crab-like inclination in his legs to sidle away from it, if not to beat a retreat altogether. There never was better occasion for instinct. Under that niche, down to which the rocky floor you stand on so treacherously inclines, is a pit three hundred feet deep—ay, by'r lady! and perhaps three times three hundred more to the back of them, if

not three times three thousand—who can tell? Mr. Lee struck bottom at two hundred and eighty feet; but, as in the case of the Bottomless Pit, to be spoken of hereafter, a stone thrown down tells quite another story. Bang, bang, rattle, rattle, bang, bang again, down it goes; now loud, now low, now loud again, and then softer and softer, until the sound gradually becomes inaudible. One false step on this villainous floor, and the thing is settled. You roll over, as a matter of course; and, as another matter of course, that hideous niche receives you into its jaws, ever gaping for prey, like the jaws of a sleeping alligator in fly time; and then comes the plunge of the three hundred feet, the crashing of bone and flesh, the—pah!

But let us sit down by its brink; the guide has many a wild and dreary story to tell, which can be best told in such a place as this.

And, first, he tells us that this identical abyss—the Crevice Pit, as it is called—sounded by Mr. Lee in 1835, with a string having a stone tied to the end of it, was sounded, many a long year before, by the miners, pretty much in the same way; only that, instead of a stone to the string, they

had a *young negro* tied to the end of it. However, this highly original plummet, it appears, was tied on with its own consent, the lad being a bold romantic fellow, ambitious to signalize himself by a daring exploit, and perhaps a brilliant discovery. Down, therefore, into the pit they lowered him; though with an effect singularly resembling that attending the Knight of La Mancha's descent into the cave of Montesinos. The rope suddenly became light, its burden had vanished; though, in due course of time, it again felt heavy in the hands of the miners, who, drawing it up, found the adventurer at its end as before. Some very wondrous story he told them, with great glee, of his having discovered, fifty or sixty feet below, a spacious and splendid cave, in which he had walked; but as he never after could be, by any persuasions, induced to attempt a second descent, it was thought he had imitated Don Quixote to the letter, ensconced himself on the first convenient ledge or shelf, and dreamed the remainder of the adventure.

The Mammoth Cave, as I observed, was wrought for saltpetre during the last war, when the price of that article was so high,

and the profits of the manufacturer so great, as to set half the western world gadding after nitre caves—the gold mines of their day. Cave hunting, in fact, became a kind of mania, beginning with speculators, and ending with hair-brained young men, who dared from the love of adventure the risks that others ran for profit. As might be expected, this passion was not always indulged without accident; and several caves in Kentucky and Tennessee obtained a mournful celebrity as the scenes of painful suffering and disaster. In some cases, caves have been entered by explorers who were never again known to leave them, and around whose fate yet hangs the deepest mystery. Accidents, not attended with loss of life, were of frequent occurrence; and, as for frights, they were lumped together in report, in the style of a constable's inventory, as too tedious to mention.

Among the tragical incidents illustrative of the time and the mania, told by the guide at the Crevice Pit, the following I consider worthy of being recorded, and the more so as it occurred within the immediate vicinity, and had therefore gained nothing by

“Travelling with increase from mouth to mouth.”

Four or five miles from the Mammoth Cave, a few paces from the bridle-path over the Knobs, by which the visiter coming from Bell's at the Three Forks, reaches it, is a cave known as the Pit Cave, though sometimes called, I believe, Wright's Cave, after the name of the person who first attempted to explore it. This man was a speculator, who having some reason to believe the cave a valuable one, resolved to examine it; but possessing little knowledge of caves and less of the business of the nitre-maker, he applied to Mr. Gatewood, the proprietor of the works at the Mammoth Cave, and of course experienced in both these particulars, to assist him in the search. A day was accordingly appointed, on which Mr. Gatewood agreed to meet him at the cave, and conduct the exploration in person. But on that day, as it happened, there arose a furious storm of rain and thunder; and Mr. Gatewood, not supposing that even Wright himself would, under such circumstances, keep the appointment, remained at his own works. In the meanwhile, however, Wright had reached the cave, in company with another man, a miner, though of no great experience in cave-hunting; and with him, finding that Mr. Gatewood did not

come, and having made all his preparations, he resolved to undertake the exploration himself. This the two men commenced, and pursued for several hours without accident and without fear, seeing, indeed, nothing to excite alarm, except a cluster of very dangerous pits, which they passed while engaged in the search. But by and by, having consumed much time in rambling about, they discovered that by some extraordinary oversight, they had left their store of candles at the mouth of the cave, having brought in with them only those they carried in their hands, which were now burning low. The horrors of their situation at once flashed on their minds; they were at a great distance from the entrance, which there was little hope they could reach with what remained of their candles, and the terrible pits were directly on their path. It was thought, however, that if they could succeed in passing these, it might be possible to grope their way from the cave in the dark, as the portion beyond the pits offered no unusual interruptions, and was without branches. The attempt was made; and as desperation gave speed to their feet, they had, at last, the inexpressible satisfaction to reach the pits, and to pass them in

safety, leaving them several hundred feet behind, ere their lights entirely failed. But now began their difficulties. In the confusion and agitation of mind which beset them at the moment when the last candle expired, they neglected to set their faces firmly towards the entrance; and in consequence, when darkness at last suddenly surrounded them, they were bewildered and at variance, Wright vehemently insisting that they should proceed in one direction, the miner contending with equal warmth that the other was the right one. The violence of Wright prevailed over the doubts of his follower, who allowed himself to be governed by the former, especially when the desperate man offered to lead the way, so as to be the first to encounter the pits, supposing he should be wrong. An expedient for testing the safety of the path, which Wright hit upon, had also its effect on his companion's mind; he proposed, as he crawled along on his hands and feet—the only way they dare attempt to proceed in the dark over the broken floor—to throw stones before him, by means of which it would be easy to tell when a pit lay in the way. The miner, accordingly, though with many misgivings, suffered himself to be ruled, and fol-

lowed at Wright's heels, the latter every moment hurling a stone before him, and at every throw uttering some hurried exclamation, now a prayer, now a word of counsel or encouragement to his companion, though always expressive of the deepest agitation and disorder of mind. They had proceeded in this way for several moments, until even the miner himself, believing that if they were in error, they had crawled far enough to reach the pits, became convinced his employer was in the right path; when suddenly the clang of one of the stones cast by Wright, falling as if on the solid floor, was succeeded by a rushing sound, the clatter of loose rocks rolling down a declivity, and then a heavy hollow crash at a depth beneath. He called to Wright; no answer was returned; all was dismal silence; not even a groan from the wretched employer replied to the call. His fate the terrified miner understood in a moment: the first of the pits was, at one part of its brink, shelving; on the declivity thus formed, the stone cast by Wright had lodged; but Wright had slipped from it into the pit, and slipped so suddenly as not to have time to utter even one cry of terror. The miner, overcome with horror, after calling again and again without

receiving any answer, or hearing any sound whatever, turned in the opposite direction, and endeavoured to effect his own escape from the cave. He wandered about many hours, now sinking down in despair, now struggling again for life; until at last yielding to his fate in exhaustion of mind and body, incapable of making any further exertions, a sudden ray of light sparkled in his face. He rushed forward—it was the morning-star shining through the mouth of the cave ! The alarm was immediately given. Mr. Gatewood, with a party of his labourers, hurried to the cave and to the pit, on whose shelving edge were seen evidences enough of some heavy body having lately rolled into it. The offer of a reward conquered the terror of one of the workmen, who was lowered with ropes to the bottom of the pit, a depth of fifty or sixty feet; and Wright's lifeless body was drawn out.

The above tragical incident I have heard confirmed by the lips of several different persons ; one of whom, however, contested the right of the morning-star to figure in it ; affirming that the miner made his way out before night, and that it was the light of day, shining at a distance *like* a star, which gave

rise to that poetical embellishment. I believe he was right. It is thus, like a star—the loveliest of all the lamps that spangle the vault of night—that daylight breaks from afar upon the adventurer, returning from the depths of the Mammoth Cave.

THE
MAMMOTH CAVE.

CHAPTER V.

THE MURDERS OF THE CAVE INN—GRAND GALLERY—THE CHURCH—NITRE WORKS—HAUNTED CHAMBERS.

AMONG other stories told at the Crevice Pit, was one—wild, and terrible enough, if true—of a man who, in former days, was master of a little tavern on a public road, some twenty miles off; at which place of entertainment, it began to be remarked by the neighbours, more travellers called than were ever known to leave it. Immediately behind the house, not fifty yards from the road, is a cavern, which, if its interior corresponds with its entrance, must be of uncommon grandeur. It opens from the level ground, by a sink or declivity like that of the Mammoth Cave; but the descent is much less precipitous, as

well as wider and longer, making a wild little glen, studded with rocks, bushes, and trees, that terminates under a vast, marble-looking arch, the mouth of the cave. The view from this mouth, looking back to the glen, is inexpressibly grand and beautiful—a vista, or picture, one might fancy, of a waste nook of Paradise, set or framed in a grotto-work of stone. The cavern is said to continue only for about a hundred yards, when it is suddenly lost in a vast pit of unknown depth.

The keeper of the Cave Inn the story represents as a dark villain, accustomed to rob and murder all travellers rich enough to reward his trouble; for which purpose, as well as for that of concealment, the cave behind the house afforded him unusual facilities. His plan of proceedings, when he had resolved the death of a traveller, was, first, under the plea of looking after the victim's horse, before going to bed, to lead the animal from the stable into the cave, and force him into the pit; then, with an appearance of concern, to inform the traveller his beast had strayed into the cave among the rocks, whence he could not remove him without assistance; and thus obtain the latter to accompany him into the infernal den; where, arriving at the chasm, a sudden blow

or push precipitated the human victim also into the gulf, and with him all evidence of the crime by which he had perished.

This horrible story I afterwards heard repeated by other persons, some of whom declared that the innkeeper's villainy had been finally brought to light by the confessions of an agonized wife, the witness, though not the accomplice, of his murders; while others thought that his guilt rested merely upon suspicion, for which the sudden disappearance of several travellers unfortunately gave too many grounds. I must confess that none of my informants were very positive in their modes of telling the story, and none able to vouch for its truth; while one cautious, or judicious, personage professed an entire disbelief in the innkeeper's guilt, hinting that the whole story had grown out of the wild prattling of a woman, the poor man's wife, who was, in the narrator's opinion, a mere unhappy lunatic. The tale, however, had currency enough to give the suspected man trouble, and he soon afterwards left the country, and was no more heard of.

But let us retrace our steps to the Vestibule; let us enter the Grand Gallery; for we

have yet much to see—or rather, we have *all* to see—and much to hear.

The Grand Gallery is a hundred feet wide, with an average height of forty or fifty. Its roof is, for the most part, flat and regular; its walls broken by massive buttresses, that here and there stare out of the gloom, and salute us with a rocky frown. Fancy traces among them a thousand majestic resemblances to scenes recollected, or imagined, in the external world. On the right hand, we see the Rocky Mountains—the Chippewyan in little, without the superfluous caps of snow; on the left, the Cliffs of Kentucky—excellent likenesses all, as far as crags fifty feet high, bare and desolate, and shrouded in never-ending night, can resemble cliffs of three hundred feet, adorned with trees and flowers, shining like marble in the brave sunshine, and glassing their beauty in the crystal river below. Among these Kentucky cliffs, just under the ceiling, is a gap in the wall, into which you can scramble, and make your way down a chaotic gulf, creeping like a rat under and among huge loose rocks, to a depth of eighty or ninety feet—that is, you can do all this, provided you do not break your neck before you get half way.

A hundred yards further on, the roof suddenly sinks somewhat, forming an inclined plane, on which clouds seem to float as in a midnight sky. And here Nature, who, in these same clouds, proves that she is not so good a painter below the earth as she is above, has scooped out a spacious cove on the left hand, as wide and high as the Grand Gallery into which it opens, but of little more than a hundred feet in extent. Here, among rude rocks, has been constructed a still ruder altar—a wooden desk, or pulpit; from which, while torches shone around from crag to crag, the preacher has proclaimed the word of God, and the voices of a congregation have arisen in solemn hosannas. The services of worship in such a place must have been strangely and profoundly impressive. It is a cathedral which, man feels, has been piled, not by the art of man, but by the will of his Maker. But it is a place to inculcate religious fear, rather than pious affection.

Another hundred yards beyond the Church—for so the cove of the pulpit is called—and you find yourself again among the ruins of nitre works. The spacious floor is occupied with vats filled in with earth, which is now, however, beginning to sink, giving to the

place somewhat the air of an ancient and neglected cemetery—a cemetery of Brobdignags. A tall frame-work of timbers, that once supported a forcing pump, is yet standing in the midst. Opposite to it, a ladder is seen resting against the right hand wall. Looking up, you perceive a gap in the wall fifty feet wide, and twenty high, with several huge rocks lying in it, one of them looking like a tower commanding the savage pass. This is the entrance of the Haunted Chambers.

THE
MAMMOTH CAVE.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GRAND GALLERY—CAVE ATMOSPHERE—WHISPERING TUBES—BRIDGE GALLERY—THE BELL—STALACTITES—THE REGISTER ROOM—THE MINER AND THE DEVILS.

WE have arrived, then, at the entrance of the Haunted Chambers—a distance of barely half a mile from the mouth of the cave; and we have still seven or eight miles of wonders before us. To describe these in detail would be an endless undertaking, and, to the reader a dull and unprofitable one—as no description, however minute, could possibly convey accurate ideas of them. In fact, an extended description of a cave would, in any case, prove wearisome. The components—the elements of caves are few and simple—rocks, stalactites, pools, pits, and darkness make up

all their variety; and however interestingly, and even variously, these may be combined to the eye of an actual spectator, the descriptions of them must consist of repetitions of the same words—of changes rung over and over again upon the same ideas. My aim is, therefore, not so much to describe the Mammoth Cave in detail, as to present a general idea of it, pausing to dwell, here and there, upon features that are most important and interesting, and upon the impressions produced by them on the visiter's mind.

But let us, before resuming our explorations, say a word of the atmosphere of the cave; which, having been, at the entrance, pronounced so *icy*, it may be feared, still retains its hyperborean character. It is icy, however, as we soon discover, only by contrast. The transition from an atmosphere of 90 or 95 degrees without, into one of about 55 or 60 within the cave, may well make us shiver for a moment. The average temperature of the Mammoth Cave is about 58 degrees Fahr. In summer it rises a few degrees higher, and in winter sinks as many below. It is, therefore, always temperate. Its purity, judging from its effects upon the lungs, and from other circumstances, is re-

markable, though in what its purity consists I know not. But be its composition what it may, it is certain, that its effects upon the spirits and bodily powers of visitors are extremely exhilarating; and that it is not less salubrious than enlivening. The nitre-diggers were a famously healthy set of men: it was a common and humane practice to employ labourers of enfeebled constitutions, who were soon restored to health and strength, though kept at constant labour; and more joyous, merry fellows were never seen. The oxen, of which several were kept, day and night, in the cave hauling the nitrous earth, were, after a month or two of toil, in as fine condition for the shambles as if fattened in the stall. The ordinary visitor, though rambling a dozen hours or more over paths of the roughest and most difficult kinds, is seldom conscious of fatigue, until he returns to the upper air; and then it seems to him, at least in the summer season, that he has exchanged the atmosphere of paradise for that of a charnel warmed by steam, all, without, is so heavy, so dank, so dead, so mephitic. Awe, and even apprehension, if that has been felt, soon yield to the influence of the delicious air of the cave; and, after a time, a certain jocund

feeling is found mingled with the deepest impressions of sublimity, which there are so many objects to awake. I recommend all broken-hearted lovers and dyspeptic dandies to carry their complaints to the Mammoth Cave, where they will undoubtedly find themselves "translated" into very buxom and happy persons, before they are aware of it.

In the Grand Gallery, opposite the entrance of the Haunted Chambers, are, as was previously mentioned, the ruins of the old nitre-works—leaching-vats, pump frames, and lines of wooden pipes. Of the last there are two different ranges, one of which was formerly used for bringing fresh water from the dripping-spring to the vats; the other for forcing it, when saturated with the salt, back to the furnaces at the mouth of the cave. These pipes, now mouldering with dry-rot, serve at present no other purpose than to amuse visitors; they are acoustical telegraphs, through which the adventurer who has penetrated so far, can transmit to his more timid friend at the entrance an assurance that he is yet in safety. A whisper bears the intelligence: even a sigh, breathed into the tube, falls as distinctly on the ear half a mile off as if the

friend who breathed it were reclining at the listener's elbow.

At this place, the roof of the Grand Gallery, perhaps thirty or thirty-five feet high, suddenly rises to about the height of fifty, which it however preserves for a distance of only fifty or sixty feet, when it again sinks to its former level. The break thus made in the ceiling, forms a part of the continuous lines of the Haunted Chambers, which may be considered as an independent cave, running at right angles with the Mammoth, and *above* it; although, dipping downward, as it crosses from right to left, it has broken through into the latter. It can be entered only on the right hand, where it opens in the wall, fifteen or more feet from the floor; a wide and lofty passage, cumbered with rocks, the chief of which is the Tower Rock,—a massive block, that looks, when viewed from below, the guide perched, flambeau in hand, on the top, like some old Saxon strong-hold not yet in ruins. You see this cave continued also on the left hand, where is a gap in the wall still wider and higher, but choked up by an immense mound of coarse sand and gravel, impacted and hardened by time, which has entirely obliterated the passage.

Curiosity has not yet attempted to dig a path through this barrier, heaped up by some mighty flood of old days; though a few hours' labor might perhaps disclose a new batch of wonders and mysteries. Clambering up the huge sand-heap, till you reach what from below seemed the ceiling, you perceive on one hand a broad cornice-work like that seen in the Vestibule, which runs from the choked-up passage clear across the Grand Gallery, until it is lost in the entrance of the Haunted Chambers opposite. Surveying this cornice-work more closely, you find that it consists of a broad horizontal plate of rock, forming a gallery, or bridge, by which you may walk across the Grand Gallery, immediately under its roof, into the Haunted Chambers, landing on the top of the Tower Rock. But it is an *Al-Sirat*,—a bridge for disembodied spirits, rather than mortals of flesh and bone, to traverse. It has an ugly inclination or dip downwards, and looks as if expressly contrived for dropping ambitious personages into the horrible profound below. Shall we enter the Haunted Chambers by this highway of the dauntless—the Bridge Gallery, so narrow, so treacherous, so dizzy? Not if we were as solidipous as an elephant; not if we

had air-pumps to our feet, like lizards and house-flies. The broad ladder laid against the wall, rickety and somewhat rungless though it be, and leading humbly, a lubber-way, to the foot of the Tower, is more to our own taste. It is but six or seven well-stretched steps from rung to rung, and we are in the Haunted Chambers, whose name itself fills us with expectant awe.

Our guide leaves us to admire alone the gulf-like abyss of the Grand Gallery, now under our feet; he has stolen away in advance, and his steps are no longer heard clattering along the rocky path. But hark! what sound is that, like the deep bell of a cathedral, or the gong of a theatre, booming in the distance, peal after peal, clang after clang, so solemn, so wild, so strange? A walk, with a few stumbles and tumbles—we have not yet our cave-legs (there are cave-legs as well as sea-legs)—reveals the mystery; and we discover our conductor standing under a pendent stalactite, thumping it with great enthusiasm and a big stone, and filling the surrounding vaults with the clangour of his flinty drum. This is one of the many *bells* (so called) which the Mammoth Cave, in common with most other caves, possesses.

We have reached, then, the abode of stalactites? Ay, here they are, pillars old and dry (for the oozing springs that formed them have long since vanished), venerable and majestic columns, once perhaps white and ghastly, like so many giants in winding-sheets, but now black, withered, and mummy-like, begrimed with smoke, that has been fastening around them for many generations. Here we see them in groves, looking like the trunks of an old forest at midnight, the rough concretions on the low roof seeming not unlike the umbrage of thick-matted boughs; there they appear singly, or in cosy family groups —Niobe and her children, Dian and her nymphs, or any such mythologic party—that Nature, like an idle sculptor, began, a thousand years ago, to hew out of stone, without, however, hewing enough to enable us to guess what might have been her real intentions.

The name of the Haunted Chambers, however poetical it may be, is incorrect, inasmuch as it conveys the idea of a series of different chambers; whereas this branch of the cave consists of but a single passage, fifty or sixty feet wide and half a mile long, leading to a lower branch, which is of equal extent, though of inferior width. The whole

length of the Haunted Chambers is, therefore, one mile. The upper branch is chiefly remarkable on account of its stalactites; at the foot of one of which—the Arm-chair, as it is called, from having a very royal seat hollowed in its side—is a little basin or pool of stone, that once received a drip of water strongly charged with sulphur, from the roof above. It is now dry, the spring having gradually sealed up the crack through which it formerly flowed. Another remarkable feature of this branch is seen in its ceiling, which, except in the immediate neighbourhood of the stalactitic formations, where it is studded over with concretions of all imaginable shapes, is surprisingly flat and smooth, and in some places white, looking as if it had been actually finished off by the plasterer. This is particularly observable in a place called the Register Room, where, the roof being low enough for the purpose, visitors frequently trace their names with the smoke of a candle; and many hundreds of such records of vanity are already to be seen deforming the ceiling. Its smoothness is owing to an incrustation or deposit of calcareous matter on the surface of the rock; though how it could ever be deposited so regularly may well be wondered.

Within two hundred yards of the termination of this Upper Branch of the Haunted Chambers, the visiter finds himself suddenly plunging down a steep of loose red sand, poetically entitled the Lover's Leap, into a hollow; at the bottom of which, in the left hand wall, is a very narrow but lofty fissure, the Devil's Elbow, winding through the wall and leading into the Lower Branch; where, under the roots of the stalactites that pillar the branch above, he may spend an hour or two among domes, pits, and sounding springs that come spouting or showering down from the roof, with the name, if not the grandeur and beauty, of waterfalls. The great Dome—or Bonaparte's Grand Dome, as the guides delight to call it—is a lofty excavation, in figure of a truncated cone, in the solid roof, from which a prodigious mass of rocks must have fallen to make it. These rocks are, however, no where to be seen; the floor is flat and solid below. They must have been swept away by some raging flood; or, it may be, that there was formerly, below the dome, a pit, into which they fell, the pit being thus filled up, and its entrance gradually obliterated by incrustation.

The Haunted Chambers are said to owe

their name to an adventure that befell one of the miners in former days, which is thus related.—In the Lower Branch is a room called the Salts Room, which produces considerable quantities of the Sulphate of Magnesia, or of Soda, we forget which—a mineral that the proprietor of the cave did not fail to turn to account. The miner in question was a new and raw hand—of course neither very well acquainted with the cave itself, nor with the approved modes of averting or repairing accidents, to which, from the nature of their occupation, the miners were greatly exposed. Having been sent, one day, in charge of an older workman, to the Salts Room to dig a few sacks of the salt, and finding that the path to this sequestered nook was perfectly plain, and that, from the Haunted Chambers being a single, continuous passage, without branches, it was impossible to wander from it, our hero disdained, on his second visit, to seek or accept assistance, and trudged off to his work alone. The circumstance being common enough, he was speedily forgotten by his brother miners; and it was not until several hours after, when they all left off their toil for the more agreeable duty of eating their dinner, that his absence was remarked, and his heroical resolu-

tion to make his way alone to the Salts Room remembered. As it was apparent, from the time he had been gone, that some accident must have happened him, half a dozen men, the most of them negroes, stripped half naked, their usual working costume, were sent to hunt him up, a task supposed to be of no great difficulty, unless he had fallen into a pit. In the meanwhile, the poor miner, it seems, had succeeded in reaching the Salts Room, filling his sack, and retracing his steps half way back to the Grand Gallery; when, finding the distance greater than he thought it ought to be, the conceit entered his unlucky brain that he *might* perhaps be going wrong. No sooner had the suspicion struck him, than he fell into a violent terror, dropped his sack, ran backwards, then returned, then ran back again, each time more frightened and bewildered than before; until at last he ended his adventures by tumbling over a stone and extinguishing his lamp. Thus left in the dark, not knowing where to turn, frightened out of his wits besides, he fell to remembering his sins—always remembered by those who are lost in the Mammoth Cave—and praying with all his might for succour. But hours passed away, and assistance came not: the poor fellow's frenzy in-

creased; he felt himself a doomed man, he thought his terrible situation was a judgment imposed on him for his wickedness; nay, he even believed, at last, that he was no longer an inhabitant of the earth—that he had been translated, even in the body, to the place of torment—in other words, that he was in hell itself, the prey of the devils, who would presently be let loose upon him. It was at this moment the miners in search of him made their appearance: they lighted upon his sack, lying where he had thrown it, and set up a great shout, which was the first intimation he had of their approach. He started up, and seeing them in the distance, the half-naked negroes in advance, all swinging their torches aloft, he, not doubting they were those identical devils whose appearance he had been expecting, took to his heels, yelling lustily for mercy; nor did he stop, notwithstanding the calls of his amazed friends, until he had fallen a second time among the rocks, where he lay on his face, roaring for pity, until, by dint of much pulling and shaking, he was convinced that he was still in the world and the Mammoth Cave. Such is the story they tell of the Haunted Chambers, the name having been given to commemorate the incident.

This Salts Room contains a pit, if we can so call a huge domed chamber below, communicating with it by means of a narrow crack in the floor. The floor is here very thin, in fact, a mere scale of rock, but, fortunately, rock of the most adamantine character. By lowering down torches, and peeping through the crack, one dimly discerns the chamber below. Its floor is at a depth of fifty feet, and is composed of firm and dry sand or clay. It seems like the vestibule of a new set of chambers, which no one has yet explored. An attempt was made by our little party to examine it, by lowering the lightest individual of the company into the pit with ropes—an enterprise that was baffled, and had nearly produced a fatal termination, in consequence of the rope's parting, or beginning to part, at the moment when our adventurous explorer was hanging midway down the pit. With a good rope, however, nothing would be more easy than to reach the bottom in safety.

THE
MAMMOTH CAVE.

CHAPTER VII.

GRAND GALLERY, CONTINUED—RUINED CAVE—
STEAMBOAT—DESERTED CHAMBERS—BOTTOMLESS
PIT.

BUT let us resume our explorations in the Grand Gallery.

Three hundred yards beyond the mouth of the Haunted Chambers, proceeding along this wide, lofty, ever frowning, and ever majestic highway, on the brow of a hill, you perceive, on the left hand, a broad chasm, reaching to the ceiling, its floor heaped with huge rocks, This is the Ruined, or Rocky Cave, extending a distance of a hundred and fifty yards, wide and high throughout, but its floor covered with blocks of stone of the most gigantic size, some exceeding twenty feet in cubic dimensions, and weighing six hundred tons. In

this cave, spread out upon the path, you find a relic of the ancient inhabitants of the place. It is an Indian mat of bark, a cloak perhaps—or a part of one, for it is only a fragment about a yard square. It may have covered, in its day, the shoulders of a warrior of renown, or of a maiden, the pride and beauty of her clan; in which thought we will but look upon it, and pass it reverently by.

A hundred yards further on, the Grand Gallery makes a majestic sweep to the right. Just where the curve begins, you see, lying against the right hand wall, a huge oblong rock, pointed at its further extremity like the prow of a ship. The Adam that gave names to the lions of the cave has christened this rock the Steamboat; and, it must be confessed, that it looks very much like a steamboat, only that wheels, and wheel-houses are entirely wanting; not to speak of smoke-stacks and the superstructure of cabins, pilot-boxes, and so on. It was some considerable period—years, in fact—after this Steamboat was observed reposing in her river of stone, before any curious person thought of peeping round her bows, to see what might be concealed behind them. The peep revealed an unanticipated mystery. A narrow, but quite easy

passage was discovered, leading into a circular room a hundred feet in diameter, with a low roof, and broken floor, hollowed like a bowl, covered with sand and gravel, in which floor were two different holes or pits, leading to unknown chambers below. This room is the Vestibule of the Deserred Chambers, but more frequently called, in allusion to its figure, the Wooden Bowl. The holes, which are so small as only to admit one person to creep down them at a time, are called the Dog and Snake Holes, and are, in many respects, worthy of their names. By descending either of them to a depth of twenty or thirty feet, we find ourselves at once in the Deserred Chambers—to many the most impressive and terrific portion of the cave. Here the visiter, if he has not felt bewildered before, finds himself at last in a labyrinth, from which no sagacity or courage of his own could remove him—a chaos of winding branches, once the beds of subterraneous torrents; and he almost dreads, at each step, to see the banished floods come roaring upon him from some midnight chamber. Now he beholds great rocks—mighty flakes scaling from the roof—hanging over him,—in one place so low that he must stoop to pass under them,—yet sus-

pended to the roof only by an edge or a corner. What was the sword of Damocles to these treacherous traps, that would, any one of them, provided it should fall, smash a rhinoceros with as much ease as a basket of eggs? The ram of a pile-engine were a falling feather in comparison. Now he startles aghast, as hollow echoes under his feet bespeak the dismal abyss from which he is separated only by a thin shell of floor. Now he stands trembling on the brink of a horrible chasm, down which the rock he has toppled goes crashing and rumbling to an immeasurable depth; or now listens, with little less of awe, at the verge of another, in which, far down, he can hear the obscure dashings of a waterfall. Now he sits upon a crag—perhaps alone—for if he would, for once in his life, feel what solitude is, (a thing man knows nothing of, even in desert islands or the solitary cells of a prison,) *here* is the place to try the experiment—with nameless passages yawning all around him, in a wilderness and desert such as his imagination never before dreamed of, reading such a lesson of his impotence and insignificance as not even the stars or the billows of the ocean can teach him. In short, the Deserred Chambers are

terrific, chaotic, and not to be conceived of by those who have not seen them; for which reason I will not attempt the task of description. It may be observed, however, that they consist of three principal branches, one of which is nearly a mile long, another the third of a mile, the remaining one only three or four hundred yards; and that all three are full of pits, domes, and springs without number. The shortest branch contains three or four fearful pits. Over one of these, called the Side-saddle Pit, projects a rock, affording a very comfortable seat to any visiter who chooses to peep into the den of darkness beneath, or the dome arching above it. Another, a well of fourteen or fifteen feet diameter, is covered by a thin plate of rock, lying on it like the cover of a pot, though a cover somewhat too small for the vessel, and seemingly supported only at one point. This is both a very curious and a very dangerous pit.

But the chief glory of this branch is the Bottomless Pit, so called, *par excellence*, and suspected by many to run pretty nearly through the whole diameter of the earth. The branch terminates in it, and the explorer suddenly finds himself brought up on its brink, standing upon a projecting platform, sur-

rounded on three sides by darkness and terror, a gulf on the right hand, a gulf on the left, and before him what seems an interminable void. He looks aloft; but no eye has yet reached the top of the great overarching dome; nothing is there seen but the flashing of water dropping from above, and smiling, as it shoots by, in the unwonted gleam of the lamps. He looks below, and nothing there meets his glance, save darkness as thick as lamp-black; but he hears a wild, mournful melody of waters, the wailing of the brook for the green and sunny channel left in the upper world, never more to be revisited. Truly, as we sit upon the brink listening, the complaining of those plaintive drops doth breath a sad and woful melancholy into our inmost spirits, a nostalgic longing for the bright and beautiful world we have left behind us. Who could believe, in this dismal cave, that earth was otherwise than a paradise? that rogues and rascals made up a part of its population? No, our remembrance, here, is only of the good and pure, the just and gentle, the noble and the beautiful; those for whose society we may yearn with a pleasant sorrow, with tears as bright and pure as these falling drops, with

sighs and murmurings as sweetly sad as these of the caverned fountain.

But sweetly sad they sound no more. Down goes a rock, tumbled over the cliff by the guide, who is of opinion that folks come hither to see and hear, not to muse and be melancholy. There it goes—crash; it has reached the bottom. No—hark! it strikes again; once more and again, still falling, still striking. Will it never stop? One's hair begins to bristle, as he hears the sound repeated, growing less and less, until the ear can follow it no longer. Certainly, if the Pit of Fredericshall be eleven thousand feet deep, the Bottomless Pit of the Mammoth Cave must be its equal: for two minutes, at least, we can hear the stone descending.

But there is, it appears to me, something deceptive in this mode of estimating the depth of a pit. Mr. Lee sounded the pit in question with a line; and, bottomless though it be, found bottom at a depth of one hundred and seventy-three feet; though he supposed, as every one else who hurls stones into it, will suppose, that his plummet had struck a shelf, the bottom of the pit being in reality a great many fathoms beneath. Nothing would be easier than to ascertain, by throwing stones

into it, the depth of a pit of perpendicular descent, and having smooth continuous walls. But it must be remembered that all such cavities are very broken and ragged, with numberless shelves and other projections, on which have lodged stones and rubbish from the mouldering walls above. A stone being cast into such a pit, if it be very deep, will naturally strike upon some shelf, from which it dislodges much of the rubbish, that falls with it to the bottom, each fragment making a louder or fainter noise, according to its weight; and of these particles the smallest ones, which are those that make the least noise, will be the longest in rolling off their perch; though, of course, once off it, they will fall as rapidly as the others. Allowing that the bottom of the pit were but a few yards below the shelf, it will be easy to perceive that the sound of these dislodged particles, falling after the stone to the bottom, the heaviest first and the lightest last, would produce all the phenomena caused by a single stone dropping from ledge to ledge for a long time, and consequently through a great depth. There is, and, indeed, can be, no certainty except in the line and plummet.

A few hundred feet back from this Bot-

tomless Pit, is a narrow chasm, called the Covered Way, which, on being followed, is found to terminate in the *side* of the pit, fifty feet below the platform; which is perhaps as great a depth into the pit as any visiter will ever choose to venture.

THE
MAMMOTH CAVE.

CHAPTER VIII.

GRAND GALLERY, CONTINUED—CROSS ROOMS—
CHIMNEYS—BLACK CHAMBERS—BEWILDERED
VISITERS—THE CATARACTS—SOLITARY CAVE
—AN INCIDENT.

RETURNING again to the Grand Gallery, and pursuing the majestic curve it makes at the place of the Steamboat, we find it presently taking another and more abrupt sweep to the left, still wide, lofty, and impressive. In the angle here made, we see the opening into another cave,—the Sick Room,—which, running back, and under the Haunted Chambers, terminates at last under the Grand Gallery near the Church, where was originally another outlet, now covered over with rubbish.

The visiter has now before him a walk of a

thousand yards; which having accomplished, he will perhaps lay aside his enthusiasm for a moment, to wonder how he is ever to get back again. Throughout the whole of this distance, the floor of the cave is strown over with loose rocks,—flakes from the ceiling and crags from the wall,—of all imaginable sizes and shapes, over which the labour of trudging, at least at the pace the guide holds most agreeable, is inconceivably great; while a certain natural anxiety to avoid tumbling into the numberless gaps betwixt the huge rough blocks, and to step upon the slabs, which eternally see-saw under your feet, precisely at the point that will enable you to preserve your equilibrium, adds greatly to your distresses; while, at the same time, it prevents your taking any note of the grandeur around, except when the guide occasionally pauses to point out some remarkable object,—the Keel-boat, (a tremendous rock sixty or seventy feet long, fifteen wide, and depth unknown,)—the Devil's Looking-Glass, (which is a hugh plate of stone standing erect,)—the Snow Room, (where even a lusty halloo brings down from the ceiling a shower of saline flakes, as white and beautiful almost as those of snow itself,)—and other such

curiosities. In another visit, he will perhaps show you what you did not before suspect, that you have passed many different openings in the left wall, running into caves called the Side Cuts, in consequence of all of them winding back again into the Grand Gallery. In one of them is a perforation,—the Black Hole,—leading into the Deserted Chambers, forming the third entrance to those wild and dreary vaults. Throughout the whole of this space of a thousand yards, the Grand Gallery is worthy of its name, being uniformly of the grandest dimensions and aspect. In two places, the rocks covering the floor are of such vast size, and lie heaped in such singular confusion, that fancy has traced in them a resemblance to the ruins of demolished cities, Troglodytic Luxors, and Palmyras; and they bear the names of the First and Second Cities.

But we have accomplished the thousand yards, the guide pauses to give us rest; we have reached a new region, we look upon a new spectacle; we are in the Cross Rooms, (so called,) at the entrance of the Black Chambers. A wilder, sublimer scene imagination could scarcely paint; even Martin might here take a lesson in the grand and

terrible. The Grand Gallery, previously contracted, in a short bend, to a width of thirty or forty feet, suddenly expands to the width of more than a hundred, which it preserves throughout a length of five hundred feet. Midway of this noble hall, on the left hand, running at right angles with it, is seen another apartment, a hundred and fifty feet wide, and, measuring from its opening, more than two hundred long; or, if we add to it the width of the Grand Gallery, three hundred feet long; the two rooms thus uniting into one in the shape of the letter T. The whole of this prodigious area is strown with rocks of enormous size, tumbled together in a manner that cannot be described, and looking, especially in the transeptal portion, where confusion is by them worse confounded, like the ruins of some old castle of the Demi-gods, too ponderous to stand, yet too massive to decay. This apartment is bounded, or rather divided, at what seems its end, by ragged cliffs forming a kind of very large island, into two branches, through both of which, clambering aloft among the rugged blocks and up two crannies, called the Chimneys, very irregular and bewildering, you can penetrate into the Black Chambers above. The whole extent of these

chambers, which are black and dismal, as their name denotes, does not exceed six or seven hundred yards; and there is nothing in them, though they contain several domes arched over mountains of fallen sandstone, with a few stalactites and clusters of crystals here and there, to compare in interest with their entrance. The greatest curiosities, perhaps, are four or five piles of stones looking like rude altars, and so denominated, left thus heaped up by the Autochthones of the cave; though for what purpose it is difficult to imagine.

The entrance into these Black Chambers by the Chimneys, however narrow and contorted they may be, is not very difficult; but the exit is quite another matter. There are as many chaotic rocks around the tops of the Chimneys in the chambers above, as at the bottom; and it is sometimes no easy task to find them; the more particularly as there are dozens of other holes exactly like them, though leading to nothing. Even the guides themselves are sometimes for a moment at fault. Some years since two young gentlemen of the West were conducted into the Black Chambers, whence, in due course of time, they proposed to return to the Grand

Gallery; a feat, however, as they soon discovered to their horror, which it was much easier to propose than perform. The guide, who happened not to be very familiar with this branch of the cave, looked and looked in vain, for the Chimneys. Not one could he find. He began to think that while he had been with the party at the extreme verge of the Chambers, the rocks must have fallen down, and sealed up the two passages. Here was a situation; and, soon there was a scene. The young gentlemen became frantic; and, declaring they would sooner die on the spot than endure their horrible imprisonment longer, condemned to agonize out existence by inches, they drew their pistols—with which, like true American travellers, they were both well provided—resolving at once to end the catastrophe. The only difficulty was a question that occurred, whether each should do execution upon himself by blowing his own brains out, or whether, devoted to friendship even in death, each should do that office for the other. Fortunately, before the difficulty was settled, the guide stumbled upon one of the Chimneys, and blood and gunpowder were both saved.

The danger of being entrapped in these

dens is perhaps as great as ever; but such an accident can only happen where the guide, besides being inexperienced, is of a temper to take alarm, or become confused at an unexpected difficulty. In all intricate passages throughout the cave, and in many that are not intricate, the rocks are marked with broad arrows pointing the way out. A piece of chalk—or, to be correct, of decomposing limestone—caught up along the way, makes an intelligible record on the black rocks of the path; and explorers at first, and after them superphilanthropic visitors, have taken care these marks shall be in abundance. The rocks at the Chimneys have their share of arrows, and a man with good eyes and a philosophic temperament will find little difficulty in making his way in and out.

In the right-hand wall of the Grand Gallery, directly opposite the Black Chambers, is the opening of another vault, (whence the name of Cross Rooms,) called Fox's Hall. It runs backward, and after a course of four or five hundred feet, returns to the Grand Gallery.

From the Black Chambers to what may be properly considered the termination of the Grand Gallery, is a distance of only two or

three hundred yards. During a part of this space, the path is very narrow, running between rudely piled, but high walls of loose stones, thrown up by the ancient inhabitants, for a purpose they doubtless understood themselves, though it will not seem very obvious to the modern visiter. The passage, however, soon widens again; and presently we hear the far-off murmur of a waterfall, whose wild pattering sound, like that of a heavy rain, but modified almost to music by the ringing echoes of the cave, grows louder as we approach, and guides us to the end of the Grand Gallery. We find ourselves on the verge of a steep stony descent, a hollow running across the cave from right to left, bounded on the further side by a solid wall extending from the bottom of the descent up to the roof, in which it is lost. In the roof, at the right hand corner are several perforations as big as hogsheads, from which water is ever falling—on ordinary occasions, in no great quantities, but after heavy rains, in torrents, and with a horrible roar that shakes the walls, and resounds afar through the cave. It is at such times that these cascades are worthy the name of Cataracts, which they bear. The water falling into the hollow below, immediately van-

ishes among the rocks. In fact, this hollow is the mouth of a great pit, loosely filled in with stones, which have not even the merit of being lodged securely. A huge mass of rocks fell, some years ago, from the little domes of the cataracts, almost filling that corner of the hollow; but they speedily crushed their way down to the original level. On another occasion, some visitors tumbling a big rock into the hollow on the left hand, the crash set all below in commotion, causing a considerable sinking in that quarter.

Over this portion of the hollow—that is, on the left hand—high up in the wall that bounds the passage, the visitor dimly discerns an opening, behind which, listening attentively, he can hear the patterning of another cascade. Descending into the hollow and clambering up a mound of stones by way of ladder, we make our way into this opening—the Garret-hole—and find ourselves between two hollows—the one we have just crossed, and a second—forming part of a concealed chamber of no great extent—into which, from a barrel-like dome above, falls the Second Cataract. Opposite to this Second Cataract, at the bottom of the wall, (which is, however, some twelve or fifteen feet above

the bottom of the hollow,) is a horizontal fissure, ten or fifteen feet wide, but so low as only to permit a man lying flat on his face to enter it. But through that narrow fissure—the Humble Chute—and in that grovelling position, we must pass, if we would visit the Solitary Cave; a branch only discovered within a few years. Indeed, if we can believe the guide, our little party was the first that ever entered it; for though the fissure had been often observed, and it was thought might lead to a new branch, neither himself nor any other individual had ever attempted to crawl through it. It is, in truth, somewhat of awe-inspiring appearance, looking like one of Milton's

“Rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell;”

though we discovered, to our great satisfaction, that it led to quite another place.

Crawling along on our faces for a hundred feet or more, we found ourselves at last in more comfortable quarters, in a cave neither very wide nor high, nor indeed extensive; the greatest length of the main passage not exceeding seven hundred yards, but curious for the dens and grotesque figures worn in the

rocks by water, and for its recent stalactites, of which there is quite a grove in the chamber called the Fairy Grotto. The Island—or Boone's Castle, as it is more poetically called—is a very curious rock supporting the roof in manner of a pier, but excavated through and through in several directions, so as to make a little room, in which you may sit at ease, looking out into the cave by sundry wide, window-like orifices in its walls. From the main passage run several narrower branches, some of which have not yet been explored. In one of them was found a kind of nest composed of sticks, moss, and leaves, with, I believe, a walnut or two in it—supposed to be a rat's nest, floated thither from some unknown higher branch; and in another passage was found a tooth resembling a beaver's. In one of the passages, called the Coral-grove Branch, is a deep pit, suspected, upon pretty strong grounds, to have some underhand kind of communication with the Cataracts, which are at no great distance; and, indeed, from an occurrence that happened some few months after the discovery of the Solitary Cave, this communication can hardly be questioned. One of the younger guides, at the time mentioned, had conducted

a visiter into the Solitary Cave, where they employed themselves looking for new branches at its extremity. It was a winter's day, very stormy; and rain was falling, when they entered the cave. The Cataracts were found pouring down water rather more freely than usual, but not in quantities to excite any alarm; and they crawled through the Humble Chute, and to the farthest recesses of the branch, without giving them a thought. In these remote vaults, as indeed in all others throughout the cave, except in the immediate vicinity of falling water, a death-like silence perpetually reigns: of course, a sound of any kind occurring, immediately attracts attention, if it does not cause dismay. I can well remember the thrilling effect produced upon myself and companions, when first exploring the Solitary Cave, by a low, hollow, but very distant sound we heard once or twice repeated, which we supposed was caused by the falling of rocks in chambers far beneath—a phenomenon, however, as it seems, of very rare occurrence. The visiter and his guide, of whom I speak, were startled from their tranquillity by a more formidable noise—a sudden rumbling and roaring, distant indeed, but loud enough to produce con-

sternation. They retraced their steps as rapidly as they could. The noise increased as they advanced; and by and by, when they reached the mouth of the Coral-grove Branch, which is two hundred yards from the Humble Chute, they found it full of water, and pouring out a flood into the Solitary Cave, here, at its lowest level. They hurried by, astounded and affrighted, yet rejoiced to find the water was not rushing into the cave through the Humble Chute, which would have effectually cut off their escape. It was no longer to be doubted that a torrent, a result of the rains, was now pouring down the Cataracts, especially the second one, immediately opposite the outlet of the Humble Chute; its terrific din made that more than evident; and it was questioned whether the body of falling water might not fill the narrow passage into which the Solitary Cave opens, and so prevent their further retreat. But the occasion was pressing; time was too precious to be wasted in hesitation. The guide crept up the Chute, and reached its outlet, where he was saluted by a flood of spray that immediately extinguished his torch. He perceived, however, that the path was still open to the Garret Hole, which if he could reach, there

was little fear of himself and companion dying the death of drowned rats. His torch proving insufficient to resist the spray and eddies of air caused by the cascade, he crept a little back into the Chute, where he manfully substituted his shirt for the torch; and with that flaming in his hands, making a gallant rush, he succeeded in reaching the Garret Hole; whence, lighting his torch again, it was afterwards not very difficult to assist in extricating his companion. The Solitary Cave was visited again, a few days after: the floods had then entirely subsided, and the Cataracts dwindled to their former insignificance, leaving no vestige of the late scene of disorder and terror.

THE
MAMMOTH CAVE.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHIEF CITY—ITS MEMORIALS—DARKNESS—
CAPTAIN B—.

STANDING again upon the verge of the declivity of the First Cataract, facing toward the mouth of the cave, we perceive on the right hand, a wide and lofty passage running from the Grand Gallery, which we did not before notice. This is commonly considered as a continuation of the Grand Gallery, or Main Cave, and may be followed for a distance of fifteen hundred yards—nearly a mile. Half a mile from its entrance at the Cataracts, it is crossed by another wide cave, the right and left hand branches of which are each half a mile long, and called, respectively, Symmes's Pit Branch and the Branch of the Blue Spring. Each has its curiosities and its

thing else—assures Miss Lavinia Small,—Peabody,—or Pettibones, that he visited the Mammoth Cave at such a date, and that he adores her, and will continue to do so as long as the rocks hold together; there another son of soul, who writes a good hand, somewhat the worse for bad paper and mouldered ink, and spells nothing aright except his own name, proclaims that he was educated at such a college, declaring that he will hold his Alma Mater in honour and affection, and also Miss Angelina B——, diffidently leaving *her* name to be guessed at; then comes another edition of Mr. Tender and Miss Small, under other names, and then another, and another without end—memorials of fond hearts and foolish heads.

From these frank confessions, whispered in pen and ink into the rocky ears of the Mammoth Cave, and the representations of the guides, there seems to be every reason to believe that the Mammoth Cave—and particularly the Chief City thereof—has a wonderful effect in awakening the tender passions; a phenomenon which, however interesting it might be to discuss, I must leave to be solved by the philosophers. I felt somewhat of an inclination, at the first peep

into them, to pocket a brace or two of these precious records; but they were secrets breathed in the confessional—offerings made to the benign (so we must conceive him) genius of the cave; and I returned them to their places, to rot and moulder, as perhaps have already done some of the idle hands that traced them.

In the Deserted Chambers, we made an effort, and a successful one, to find out what *solitude* was. Let us, in this fearful vault, upon this mound of rocks, two miles away from the blessed light of heaven, prove what is *darkness*;—a thing, I devoutly believe, quite as little known in the outer world, even as solitude. Let us blow out our torches. What should we fear? We have our pockets full of Lucifers, and ‘can again our former lights restore,’ whenever it repents us. What, indeed, *can* we fear? Man is not with us: we are alone with God. Is darkness so very terrible?

“ He that has light within his own clear breast,
May sit i’ the centre, and enjoy bright day.”

Puff, puff, puff—it is done; the torches are out, and now we are indeed in darkness. Ah!

that those who dream that Heaven, in visiting them with a little affliction, a little desolation, a little gloom—the darkest that was ever infused into the sparkling dew-drop of life—has quenched the light of hope and happiness, leaving the spirit in midnight, should sit with us upon this rock, and say if such darkness as *this* ever lay even for a moment upon the mind! Never: such darkness were annihilation. It is awful. The atmosphere is a rock, palpable and solid as the limestone walls around; the very air seems petrified—condensed into a stratum of coal, in which we sit encased like toads or insects—fossils—living fossils. Such it is to us—to man; all whose skill exhausted in the most ingenious devices, could not collect from it light enough to see his own fingers. Yet the bat flutters by at ease; and the rat, which has no such fine organization as his airy cousin, or as a *somnambule* from the digits of an Animal-Magnetizer—creatures, as we all know—the bat and the *somnambule*—that see through their bodies, or, rather, see by instinct, without the intervention of visual apparatus of any kind—the rat scampers over the rocks with equal facility and confidence; and, doubtless, if a cat were here, she also would find

light enough to make a bold dash at his rat-
ship. But we are in gloom—gloom unparal-
leled by any thing in the world. Truly,
indeed, man knows nothing about darkness
there—Alas! none but those to whose eyes
Heaven has denied the blessing of light alto-
gether. The *blind* see such darkness; and
here we can learn (for during a period we
can feel it) the depth and misery of the pri-
vation.

And now, while thus sitting in gloom ineffable, a secret dread (notwithstanding the actual assurance we possess of security) stealing through our spirits, we can understand and appreciate the horror of mind which inevitably seizes upon men lost in caves, and deprived of their lights; even when their reason—if they could listen to that ever ill-used counsellor, the victim and football of every fitful passion—tells them that their situation is not wholly desperate. Although no fatal accident has ever happened in the Mammoth Cave, men have been frequently lost in it; or, at least, have lost their lights, and so been left imprisoned in darkness. In such a case, as proceeding in any direction in the dark is quite out of the question, all that is to be done is to sit patiently down,

waiting until relief comes from without; which will happen as soon as the persons outside have reason, from your unusual stay, to suspect that some such catastrophe has occurred. This every body who enters the cave knows well enough, and none better than the guides; and, one would suppose, such knowledge would always, in case of accident, preserve from unmanly terror. The case is, however, as numerous examples prove, quite otherwise; guide and visiter, the bold man and the timid, yield alike to apprehension, give over all as lost, and pass the period of imprisonment in lamentations and prayers. It is astonishing, indeed, how vastly devout some men, who were never devout before, become, when thus lost in the cave; though, as might be suspected, the fit of devotion is of no longer duration than the time of imprisonment:

“When the devil was sick, the devil a monk would be;
When the devil was well, the devil a monk was he”—

applies very well to the history of cave conversions. I had the good fortune, when on my way to the Mammoth Cave some years ago, in a certain city of the South-West,

to stumble upon a worthy gentleman, who, among his many virtues public and private, was not supposed to lay any particular claim to religious devotion; or if he did, took no great pains to make it evident: on the contrary, I heard it very energetically averred by one who was a proficient in the same accomplishment, "that Captain B—— could swear harder than any other man on the Mississippi." The Captain ascertaining whither we were directing our footsteps, congratulated us upon the pleasures we had in store, and concluded by informing us that he had visited the Mammoth Cave himself, and, with his guide, had been lost in it, remaining in this condition and in the dark, for eight or nine hours. "Dreadful!" my friend and self both exclaimed: "what did you do?" "Do!" replied the Captain, with the gravity of a philosopher; "all that we could;—as soon as our lights went out, we sat down upon a rock, and waited until the people came in and hunted us up." We admired the Captain's courage, and went on our way, until we had arrived within two miles of the Mammoth Cave; when a thunder-shower drove us to seek shelter in a cabin on the way-side.

Here we found a man who had been born and bred, and lived all his life, within so short a distance of the cave, without having ever entered it: in excuse of which unpardonable deficiency, he told us, "he had a brother who had been in it often enough," had sometimes officiated as guide, and had once even been lost in it. "He was along with a gentleman he was guiding—Captain B—: perhaps you know Captain B—?" said our hospitable host, "Captain B— of _____. Well, he was the gentleman with my brother: they lost their lights, and were kept fast in the desperate hole for nine hours—awfully frightened, too." "What! Captain B— frightened?" "Just as much as my brother: I have heard my brother tell the story over a hundred times. They got to praying, both of 'em, as loud as they could; and my brother says, the Captain made some of the most beautiful prayers he ever heard in his life! and he reckons, if the Captain would take to it, he'd make a rale tear-cat of a preacher!"—O philosophy! how potent thou art in an arm-chair, or at the dinner table!

But we have been long enough in darkness, long enough even in the cave. We re-

light our torches, we bid farewell to the Hall of the Chief City, and returning to the Grand Gallery, retrace the long path that leads us back to daylight.

THE
MAMMOTH CAVE.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

THE Mammoth Cave possesses few features of interest for a geologist or naturalist. It may be considered a great crack opened in the thick bed of limestone, by some convulsion, or series of convulsions, which have left it in some places in its original condition, while, in other parts, it has been worn and altered by rushing floods that have swept into it sand, gravel, and clay; while, also, the infiltration of springs from above has, here and there, destroyed the calcareous crust, and exposed the superstratum of sandstone. The earthquakes, that have left their visible devastations in every part of the cave, must, however, have been a thousand times more violent than those of modern days. Many

shocks—the concussions that succeeded the great New Madrid earthquake of 1811—were experienced by the nitre-diggers, while at work in the cave; but, though sorely frightened on each occasion, they never saw a single rock shaken from the roof or walls. The rock contains no fossils, or none that we could discover; though shells abound in the limestone in the vicinity. No fossil bones have been discovered. Human bones in a recent condition were dug up near the entrance; but no mummies were found. The mummy in one of the public museums said to be from the Mammoth Cave, was taken, we were told, from a cave in the neighbourhood—we believe, the Pit Cave; though deposited for awhile in the Mammoth Cave for exhibition. There are vast numbers of rats in the cave, though we never could get sight of any of them. What they can find to live on may well be wondered at. In winter, the roof of the cave, as far in, at least, as the Black Chambers, where we found them in numbers, is seen dotted over with bats. In the low and humid branches, there may frequently be seen, galloping along over roof and floor, an insect with long cricket-like legs, and body like a spider; and a smaller insect, somewhat

like that "strange bedfellow," with which misery makes us acquainted, may be sometimes discovered.

I have frequently had occasion to speak of the Indians, the original *inhabitants* of the cave; and, indeed, this is to me one of the most interesting subjects connected with the Mammoth Cave. I use the word *inhabitants*; for mere visitors, unless the cave was, in its day, much more of a lion among the savage Red-men than it is now, even among their white successors, could never have left behind them so many vestiges. We have seen what vast quantities of broken, half-burnt canes lie among the rocks of the Chief City. They are scattered in other parts of the cave—I might say, throughout the whole extent of the Grand Gallery—in nearly equal profusion. These, there can be little doubt, are the remains of torches—in some cases of fires; for which former purpose they were tied together with strips of young hickory bark, into little faggots. Such faggots are still occasionally picked up, half-consumed, the thongs still around them. Besides, there have been discovered stone arrow-heads, axes, and hammers, and pieces of pottery, with moccasins,

blankets of woven bark, and other Indian valuables; in short, evidence sufficient to prove that these occidental *Troglodytes* actually *lived* in the cave. No mere visitors would have taken the trouble to build the walls in the Grand Gallery near the Cataracts; much less to clear away the rocks from the floor of the Blue-Spring Branch, as we find has been done, so as to make a good path on the sand beneath. There are, in several branches, places where the walls have been picked and beaten with stone-hammers—for what purpose no one can tell; in others, rocks heaped up into mounds, and the earth separated—the object of such labour, as we cannot suppose the Indians did dig villanous saltpetre, being equally mysterious; neither of which could have been done by temporary visitants. Nor could such visitants have made themselves so thoroughly acquainted with the cave; into every nook of which they seem to have penetrated, leaving the prints of their moccasins and naked feet in the sand and clay of the low branches, and fragments of their cane torches in the upper ones. Even in the Solitary Cave, previously unknown to the guides, we found, in one place, the print of a naked foot. One would think

the curious fellows had even entered some of the pits; as there are long ropes, or withes of hickory bark, sometimes found, which look as if they might have been prepared for such a purpose. At all events, it is quite plain that the Mammoth Cave was once the dwelling-place of man—of a race of the Anakim, as some will have it, whose bones were disinterred in the Vestibule; or, as common-sense personages may believe, of a tribe of the common family of Red-men, who, in ages not very remote, occupied all the fertile valleys along the rivers of Kentucky. Some such clan, I suppose, dwelt on Green River, at Cave Hollow, using the Mammoth Cave as a kind of winter-wigwam, and—a more common use of caves among Indians—a burial place. The tribe has vanished, and their bones, (to what base uses we may return!) converted into gunpowder, have been employed to wing many a death against their warring descendants.

But of Indians, charnels, and caves no more: we have reached the confines of day; yonder it shines upon us afar, a twinkling planet, which increases as we advance, changing from pallid silver to flaming gold.

It is the gleam of sunset playing upon the grass and mosses at the mouth of the cave.

Oh, World, World! he knows not thy loveliness, who has not lived a day in the Mammoth Cave!

THE

BLOODY BROAD-HORN.

CHAPTER I.

WESTERN STEAMBOATS—THE OHIO RIVER.

THE frequency, and dreadful character, of accidents by steam on the Western waters, have, among other effects, very generally induced the good people of the East to regard an Ohio or Mississippi steamboat as nothing better than a floating man-trap—a locomotive volcano, on which Western ladies and gentlemen take their seats for the purpose of being blown into eternity.

After forming such a conception, and drawing in his mind a suitable picture of the infernal-machine, in which he is to take his chance of a visit to the other world—a picture of some clumsily constructed hulk, painted over with flames and fiery devils, like the *San-benito* of a prisoner of the Inquisition,

perhaps, also, begrimed with the blood of former victims—the traveller is somewhat astonished to find himself in a stately and splendidly appointed barge, that might have served the need of Cleopatra herself, and which will certainly vie with, if it does not entirely surpass in magnificence, the finest steamers he has ever floated in, in any other part of the world. His astonishment will increase, when, searching out the commander, whom he expects to discover picking his teeth with a bowie-knife, or drinking grog out of a barrel, he lights upon a very well behaved and companionable personage, who does the honours of his vessel with all courtesy, and declares he never yet blew up a boat, and never even races, unless when his passengers particularly request it; when he finds the engineer oiling his pump-rods, instead of weighing down the safety-valve; and the pilot industriously sighting his distances, instead of shooting down strangers on the shore. In short, after making many more equally surprising discoveries, he will at last come to the conclusion that the occurrence of accidents in a great many Western steamboats does not necessarily imply that accidents must, or even *may*, happen in all; and that he is, perhaps, as safe and has as

good reason to enjoy himself, during his voyage, as if caged in the quietest "low-pressure" on the Delaware.

When a man discovers that he may enjoy himself, it is a very common consequence that he will do so. And it is my impression, confirmed by repeated enterprises in those formidable vessels, that a man may enjoy himself to as great, if not to greater advantage in a Western steamboat than in any other in the land. One chief reason of this is the length of the voyage one commonly takes in the Western boat, whereby travellers have time to turn about them, to strike up friendships with one another, and make the acquaintance of the captain and officers, from whom they may thus glean wayside anecdotes and information, not to be gained in shorter trips. Another reason is the general frankness of manners which, a characteristic of the West, all men seem naturally to fall into, the moment they reach the West. But perhaps the greatest reason of all will be found in the peculiar structure of the Western boat, which is so planned as to compel travellers to congregate together in little squads or knots, instead of in one great multitude, whereby sociableness is in a manner

forced upon them. There is in her no great gathering-place, like the quarter-deck of an Eastern steamboat, where passengers huddle together upon benches, to stare each other sadly and bashfully in the face; but a great number of smaller retiring places—the boiler-deck, the social hall, and, above all, the galleries, in which little groups of men, accidentally met, find no difficulty in forming themselves into agreeable parties.

If I were to add, that the fact of there being no place of convocation in a Western steamboat equally free to the ladies as to the gentlemen, may be another great reason why the latter so easily enjoy themselves, I do not know that I should be guilty of a libel upon either. The truth is, that men in America, and especially in the West, are so egregiously civil to all womankind, and carry their courtesy to such excess of painful respect, as to embarrass both themselves and the fair objects of their reverence, so that they reciprocally act as dampers upon each other; and I believe, upon observation, that they are, in general, after being a few moments together, in any general place of assemblage, as happy to fly each other, as schoolboys to escape a good aunt who has been stuffing

them with excellent advice, instead of sugar-plums.

Of the voyage on the Mississippi I have spoken in another place. The voyage on the Ohio is infinitely more agreeable, *La Belle Rivière* being rich in all those charms of bold and varied scenery, of which the Father Water is almost entirely destitute. One is not here oppressed by a continual succession of willows and cottonwoods springing from swampy islands and quagmire shores, and a horizon so low as to be ever concealed from the eye. Beautiful hills, springing here from the margin of the tide, there rising beyond cultivated fields or gleaming towns, track the course of the Ohio from its springs to its mouth; and high bluffs, crowned with majestic planes, shingled beaches, and lovely islands, changing and shifting in myrioramic profusion, present an ever changing series of prospects, of strongly marked foregrounds relieved against blue distances, so dear to the eyes of painters and lovers of the picturesque.

Add to this that the Ohio has its *storied* shores, its places of renown, its points to which we can attach the memories of other days; and we may imagine what pleasure

awaits the voyager on its bosom, who has once succeeded, as, in general, he will very easily do, in throwing aside all fears, and thoughts, of half-burned boilers and desperately weighted safety-valves.

For my own part, I can say that in no river of the United States do I always more confidently expect, or more uniformly experience, the enjoyment of a steam excursion, than on the upper Ohio; and I hold a trip, in the dull season—that is, when the vessels are not over-crowded with passengers—in a neat little summer boat—if a *slow* one, so much the better—with a pleasant captain, a civilized cook, and good humoured companions—whether the voyage be up or down—as one of the most agreeable expeditions that can well be taken.

On such an occasion, one is pretty sure of finding companions both able and willing to talk—men who possess in an uncommon degree the intelligence and powers of conversation so general in the West, who know every man and thing in, and appertaining to, their own states or districts, and every local history and anecdote which a curious person might desire to hear. One may even light, at such times, upon an old pioneer and found-

er of the West, an original colonist of Kentucky or Ohio, a contemporary, perhaps, of Boone and Clark, who, solicited by his junior fellow-travellers, and warmed as much by their interest in his conversation, as by his own stirring recollections, can speak of the days of the border, of the times and scenes that tried men's souls, and pour a stream of forest story, the fresher and more delightful to his hearers for being thus drunk at the fountain-head.

It was once my fortune, on such a voyage, to meet such a story-teller, a venerable old man who was acquainted with every point of note on the river, and had descended it more than forty years before, performing a voyage, which—at that period, always dangerous—was, in this case, attended with circumstances peculiarly perilous and dreadful. His story, interesting in itself, had, moreover, the additional merit of being told upon the place of its occurrence, upon the river whose waters had been dyed with his own blood and the blood of many a hapless companion, and at the very spot which had witnessed its fearful catastrophe. It was a tale strongly illustrative, and with but few exaggerated features, of the earlier navigation of the Ohio, when

the unwieldy flat-boat, or *broad-horn*, took the place of the steamer; when men inexperienced in navigation, and entirely unacquainted with the river upon which they so boldly launched, were the only sailors and pilots; and when, above all, the river-banks were lined with Indians, lying in wait to plunder and murder.

It was a fine evening of early October, 183—; the beautiful hills, forest-clad to the top, had put on their glorious mantles of gold and scarlet; the clumps of trees on the shores and islands,—some half bared of leaves, displaying the tufts of green mistletoe on their branches and the purple ivies draping their pillared trunks, some still in full leaf and glowing, here like a sunshiny cloud, and there like a hillock of cinnabar—glossed themselves in a tide as smooth and bright as quicksilver, in which their reflections, and the images of bank and hill, were as clear and distinct to the vision as the objects themselves; so that we seemed to be rather sailing down a river of air than any grosser element.

It was an hour when—every one having finished his supper—travellers felt sentimental and philosophic, and dragged their chairs to the boiler-deck; where—with the

consciousness all had, that, in case of a boiler bursting, they were in the best place in the boat to be blown to atoms—each surveyed the Eden-like prospects continually arising, admired, commented, and prepared his store of anecdote, to take part in the story-telling conversation, which always formed the entertainment of the evening.

It was at this period that the old gentleman, (Mr. Law, he said, was his name,) who had on previous occasions narrated many interesting anecdotes of other persons, without doing more than hint at his own adventures, was prevailed upon to speak of himself, of his own travel's history; which he did with such unction and effect, at least so far as regarded myself, that I was never easy afterward until I had fully committed his story to writing. I have only to regret that I did not obtain for it, as thus faithfully recorded, the proper evidence of authenticity; that is, a certificate of its accuracy by the narrator, under his own hand and seal; which would have settled the doubts of all such skeptical persons as may be disposed to regard it as a fiction and coinage of my own imagination.

THE
BLOODY BROAD-HORN.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH MR. MICHAEL LAW BEGINS HIS STORY: WITH
SOME ACCOUNT OF COLONEL STORM AND HIS FA-
MILY.

“HAD Fulton and Stevens, and the other great men who have covered the rivers of America with steamboats,”—thus began the narrator,—“commenced their experiments twenty years earlier than they did, the history of the West would have presented no such tales of blood as I am now about to relate, and its settlement would have advanced with equal rapidity and safety. With a steamboat on the Ohio, to waft us, the first invaders of the wilderness, upon our voyage, instead of the wretched broad-horns in which so many of us went to our deaths, the voyage to Kentucky would have present-

ed none of those dangers and difficulties by which colonization was so seriously retarded, and the rich fields of the West left so long in possession of the savage Red-man.

“I was born in Virginia, in what is now Jefferson county, on the Upper Potomac,—an honourable birth-place; but I cannot boast a lineage either rich or distinguished. On the contrary, I found myself, at the age of eighteen, in the month of March, 1791, an ignorant younker, (ignorant of every thing but the rifle, which I had learned to handle in hunter’s style by mere instinct, and the hoe, the use of which noble implement starvation and a hard-labouring father had as early taught me,) set adrift upon the world, to seek my fortune, or, in other words, shift for myself as I could; my father, Michael Law, (which is also my own name,) having brought home to his cabin, one fine morning, a new friend in the person of a step-mother; who was never at rest until she had succeeded in driving me from the house; a catastrophe to which my father the more readily consented, as I was now, he said, ‘a man grown, and full as able to make my way in the world as he was.’

“He gave me his blessing, a knife, a new

shirt, and a pair of shoes, with an old haversack to put them in, a dried venison-ham, (which was, however, of my own shooting,) and as much parched corn as I chose to carry; and my step-mother adding, as proofs of her affectionate regard, a pair of stockings and a worsted nightcap of her own knitting, I bade them farewell; and, in company with three other adventurers like myself, turned my face towards Pittsburg, with the design of proceeding to Kentucky; where I was told I might have a fine farm for nothing, save an occasional fight for it with the Indians, and plenty of stock, horses and cows, as many as I might want, from any body for the mere asking.

“Arriving at Pittsburg, then a miserable little hamlet, in which no wiseacre could foresee the bustling and important city into which it has now grown, I began to be somewhat alarmed at the dismal stories every one had to tell of the terrors of the downward voyage, of the frequent, nay, daily destruction of boats with all on board, by the Indians; from whom, many declared, it was a mere accident and miracle that any boats should escape at all. My companions were even more dismayed than I, one of them returning home

within a week, and the others hiring themselves out at labour upon the fortress, which the government of the United States was then constructing at Pittsburg.

“ As for me, having a little money in my pocket, won at sundry-shooting matches during the preceding winter, and treasured up against a rainy day, I resolved to play the gentleman as long as it lasted, and then determine upon the course to be pursued—to go to work like my friends, for which I had but little appetite, having a soul quite above my condition, or join some enterprising boat’s crew, and proceed to Kentucky, for which I still felt a hankering, notwithstanding the notorious perils of the voyage.

“ My money, as I employed it freely, first, in decorating my person with a much handsomer suit of clothes than had ever before decked it, and, secondly, in establishing myself in the best tavern in the place, I soon managed to make away with; upon which, having now made up my mind for Kentucky, I began to look about me for a boat, and the means of obtaining a passage in it to Kentucky.

“ In this I found no great difficulty. The great preparations which General St. Clair,

Governor of the Territories Northwest of the Ohio, and commander of the national forces in the West, was making at his camp, Fort Hamilton, the site, as all know, of the present Cincinnati, for a great expedition, which, every body supposed, was to sweep the Indians from the face of the earth, and so end the Indian wars in Kentucky for ever, had given a vast impulse and increase to emigration; and there was now not a week,—indeed, scarce a day, in which some boat, or fleet of boats, did not depart from Pittsburg. And these were seldom so heavily laden, or strongly manned, but that room could be readily found for a single unencumbered man, a sprightly lad like myself, who could balance a rifle, had muscles for an oar, and otherwise promised to make himself serviceable on the voyage.

“ It was my good fortune (for such, notwithstanding the disasters of the voyage, I shall always esteem it,) to find, among other emigrants who were making their preparations for descending the river, a certain Colonel Storm, a worthy old gentleman of Virginia, who had fought through the French Wars and the Revolution at the head of a regiment of Buckskins, and bore the reputa-

tion of a brave officer, as well as a rich man. He was on his way to Kentucky, to locate bounty-grants of his own, as well as others belonging to brother officers, for whom he acted as agent; and he intended also to settle in Kentucky; for which purpose, he had brought with him his family—consisting, however, of but a single daughter, a beautiful and amiable girl of seventeen—and a great deal of property, horses, cattle, furniture and farming implements, and a dozen or more slaves, enough in all to fill two or three boats of the ordinary kind.

“With such a property at stake, and so many things to encumber him on the voyage, he was desirous to enlist the services of as many bold assistants as he could procure, and therefore offered, besides a free passage and support, a considerable bounty to such persons as would take service with him for the expedition.

“Hearing of this, and that he had nearly completed his crews, and expected to put off in a very few days, I went to him forthwith, to offer my services, and was immediately ushered into his presence. He was a fine portly, powdered, and military-looking old gentleman, but, as I soon saw, hot and irasci-

ble of complexion, his temper being especially soured at the time of my visit, by a fit of the gout, which had suddenly fastened upon one of his legs; and as I entered the room, I heard him scolding very bitterly at a young man, who seemed to be his clerk or secretary, and was busy among books and papers, which he tumbled over in a hurried and confused manner, as if irritated by the Colonel's remarks, and yet struggling to keep down his anger without reply.

“The old gentleman seeing me, demanded very sharply, ‘who I was, and what I wanted?’

“I told him, ‘I came to enter with him for the Kentucky voyage;’ upon which he gave me a stare of contempt, and angrily exclaimed,—‘What! with that tailor’s finery on your back?’ (for I had my best suit on:) ‘Oons and death, I want men, not coxcombs! Men, you jackdaw! men that can stare death in the face, and take the devil by the top-knot!’

“I told him, being somewhat galled by his contemptuous expressions, that ‘I was man enough for his purpose, or any body else’s;’ at which he burst into a passion, swore at me for ‘an insolent hobnail,’ and concluded the

angry tirade by asking me 'what I was good for? and what I could do?'

" 'Any thing,' replied I, as stiffly as a lord, 'any thing that any other man can do.'

" 'Oh, ay, I doubt not!' said he, ironically, and grinning over his shoulder at the young man, his clerk, 'you can read novels, and write verses, and play the fiddle, and dangle after the women, eh?' and he darted another bitter glance at the young fellow, who put his hand up to his head, and twisted it among his hair, looking very much incensed, but still made no reply.

" 'I can read,' said I, and with great truth and honesty, 'very well in the Testament, and any other book with big print: and I can write, too, right smart; only my master never put me in small-hand.' At which answer, Colonel Storm burst into a laugh; which I mistook for a laugh of incredulity, and therefore hastened to assure him I spoke nothing but the truth; adding, which I did with great frankness, that 'as for the fiddle, I knew nothing about it, having never tried my hand at any thing better than a banjo. But as for the women,' I said, with equal honesty, 'though I don't know any thing about dangling,

I reckon I can kiss a pretty girl as well as any body.'

" ' Well,' said Colonel Storm, fetching another laugh, and then giving me a second diabolical grin, which, I believe, was owing to a sudden twinge in his foot, ' that's neither here nor there. What can you do that's like a *man*? for there's the point to be considered?

" ' I can draw a good bead upon a rifle,' I replied; upon which the Colonel roared, with approbation, ' Now you talk like a man, and not a jackass!' ' Yes, sir,' I continued, swelling with a sense of my importance and superior skill in an exercise which, I perceived, he regarded as a merit; ' I can't pretend to be any great shakes at the reading, and writing, and fiddling; but I can go the Old Sinner on a cut-bore, kill death at a knife fight, and out-wrestle any man of my inches this side the Alleghany!' All which was, perhaps, more than half true; for in those, my cubling days, I was, I am sorry to say, something of what we, now-a-days, call ' a young screamer.'

" ' Bravo!' cried Colonel Storm, turning maliciously to the young secretary; ' do you hear that, Tom Connor? Here's a young

fellow can shoot, and fight, and do other things a man can; and not a bit of reading, and writing and fiddling, and woman-dangling does he care for. Oons, sir, I thought I should have made a man of you!"

"The young fellow, Connor, as the Colonel called him, started up, as if stung by the old man's remark, and, I believe, was about to make some passionate rely; but just then the Colonel's daughter came into the room, with some drug-stuff in a cup she had brought her father, and Connor instantly resumed his seat, busying himself among the papers.

"The young lady remained in the room but a few moments; but I had time to observe she was what I called her—that is, a very beautiful girl, whose charms and elegance,—such as I had never before seen equalled among the women of our rude border country,—almost struck me dumb with admiration. I saw her look very earnestly, as she passed his chair, at the young secretary, who, however, kept his eyes sullenly fixed on his papers; a circumstance which appeared to me to displease the young lady, who drew herself up and proceeded to her father, to whom she presented the cup, which, with sundry wry faces, he swallowed; and then giving her a kiss, and

calling her 'his dear Alicia,' he dismissed her from the apartment.

"The old gentleman now gave me to understand that he accepted my services, bade me write my name on a book before the secretary, whom he ordered to advance me a sum of money, being a part of his bounty, which Connor immediately did; and I found myself enlisted, for such was the term the old soldier applied to the engagement, in his 'private broad-horn service,'—so Colonel Storm called it,—to be attached to Boat No. 1, in the capacity of rifleman, oarsman, and, indeed, all other capacities, as might be necessary. I was ordered to present myself at the boat on the following morning, and hold myself in readiness to depart within two days, and then took my leave.

"While I was leaving the room, there entered a gentleman, with whose appearance I was very much struck. He was a tall, elegant man, thirty years old, wore a half-military suit of clothes, finely made, had bright eyes, and long black hair, which he wore without powder, and, in short, had every air of a gallant soldier and distinguished gentleman. I heard Colonel Storm, who received him with much warmth and cordiality, though grinning

at the moment under a paroxysm of pain, salute him by the name of Captain Sharpe; and I observed that while he bowed, which he did very politely in passing, to Connor the secretary, the latter, though he bent his head in return, gave him a look as black as midnight. It was evident he was no friend of Connor, or Connor no friend of him.

THE
BLOODY BROAD-HORN.

CHAPTER III.

THE STORY OF MICHAEL LAW CONTINUED—A BORDER BALL, AND AN INCIDENT.

“ THESE things, which I mention so particularly now, because they have an intimate connection with my story, struck me with some interest at the time. And having, besides, a natural curiosity to know something of the individuals who were to be my companions in the voyage, I made inquiries concerning them of sundry persons better acquainted with their history than myself, though without acquiring much more than I already knew.

“ The young man, Connor, I learned, was a dependant and protégé of the Colonel, a son of a poor soldier,—for his origin was no higher,—who had, in some way or other,

managed to lose his life in saving that of the Colonel. The latter, from gratitude to his preserver, extended his protection to the soldier's boy, whom he had reared up and educated in his own house, and almost adopted as his own child. I was assured, he always had been, and was still, a great favourite with the old gentleman, who was extremely fond of him; but then the Colonel was a whimsical and violent tempered man, and the gout had, of late, made him a hundred times more wayward and irascible than ever, so that it was scarce possible for any one about him, but his own daughter, to endure his furious attacks of ill-humour. Connor was, from his position continually near his person, more exposed to suffer from his wrath than others; but Connor had arrived at an age, when, beginning to be conscious of his dependant condition, he was naturally the more intolerant of unkindness. The Colonel had twitted him in my presence with certain effeminate propensities, a love of books, music, female society, &c., and neglect of all manly accomplishments; which the young man must have felt as the more unreasonable, since it was represented that the Colonel had himself, by scarce ever allowing the favourite out of his

sight, prevented his acquiring the active habits he commended, and compelled him into those effeminate ones which he condemned.

“ But with all the scolding and fault-finding he was forced to endure, I was assured, Connor was as much beloved as ever, and that there was more than a probability the Colonel would, some day, prove his affection by making him his son in reality,—that is, by giving him his fair daughter Alicia to wife.

“ Of Captain Sharpe, all I could learn was, that he was a very gallant officer, a South Carolinian, and son of an old military friend and brother-in-arms of Colonel Storm, who had stumbled upon him by accident in Pittsburg, and received him to his friendship as a worthy son of his old comrade. What had brought such a fine gentleman as Captain Sharpe to the frontier did not so clearly appear; though some said it was because of an unfortunate duel with a brother officer, which, being of very recent occurrence, had compelled the survivor to banish himself for a time from society and the world. I must confess, that I heard some uncharitable persons hint a suspicion that Captain Sharpe was not in all respects the honourable and exemplary personage his fine appearance

seemed to show; and of this opinion, it appeared, was young Connor, the secretary, who, I was informed, had got himself into a difficulty with his hot-headed protector, by acquainting the latter with his suspicions; for, it seemed, the veteran had been captivated by the soldier, 'a man,' as he called him, 'after his own heart,' and would endure no imputations against his honour, however, to appearance, reasonable and just. Of this I had myself, after a time, very good proof, as I shall presently relate.

"Having thus obtained all the information to be then acquired, and visited the Colonel's boats, to make the acquaintance of my fellow *engagés*, my affairs settled, and some money again in my pocket, I turned about, like a lad of spirit, to see how I could spend my few days of liberty to the best advantage. It happened that a ball, got up by the garrison officers and others, the gentry of the town, was to take place that night; and to this, being blessed with an equal stock of simplicity and assurance, I resolved to go, not having the least suspicion that my appearance there could involve any impropriety. With a good coat on my back, I felt myself equal to any body; and my border

breeding had taught me but little of the distinctions of society.

“To the ball I accordingly went; and, as it was held in the big room of a hotel, was by no means managed with the tender solicitude to keep out intruders that now prevails at such entertainments, and exhibited among its highly miscellaneous assemblage many individuals not a whit more genteelly dressed than myself, I neither found difficulty in making my way into the room, nor, for a long time, of maintaining my position in it.

“I must confess, that I was at first rather daunted by the appearance of the company, so much finer, notwithstanding an occasional departure from elegance, than any I had ever seen before; the dashing looks of the officers in their uniforms, of young civilians with powdered heads and velvet breeches, and, above all, of the ladies arrayed in their silks and satins, their plumes, and ribands, and laces; and the fine music, for such it appeared to me, made by a military band, added to some half a dozen fiddles, had also its effects in abashing and embarrassing me; and had any body at that moment made objection to my intrusion, I have no doubt I should have sneaked quietly out of the room, conscious, for the

first time, that I had stumbled into society quite above my condition.

“ But no one noticed me, and my embarrassment began gradually to wear away; and besides, I fell upon a means of recruiting my courage in a still more expeditious and effectual way. I observed that many of the gentlemen dancers, after handing the usual ball-room refreshments to their partners, turned up their own noses at them—that is, not at their partners, but the refreshments—and slyly slipped down stairs to the bar of the hotel, where more manly refreshments were to be had. Perceiving this, and not knowing what I could better do than imitate my betters, I slipped down likewise, and, sorry I am to say, not once only, but several times; so that, in the end, my modesty took to itself wings, and I found myself as bold as a lion and happy as a lord; in short, entirely beside myself. It must be recollected, that I was a young and ignorant booby, who, besides being just let loose upon the world, and therefore incapable of taking care of myself, possessed a brain none of the strongest for resisting generous liquors.

“ My first glass infused such courage into my veins, that I was able to look boldly

around me upon the assembly, here giving a gentleman a stiff look, and there staring a lady out of countenance. While thus engaged, my eyes fell by chance upon my employer's daughter, the fair Alicia, who, it seemed, was present, and, indeed, was considered the great beauty of the ball. She was about to dance a minuet, and, as it proved, with Captain Sharpe, who led her into the middle of the room; where space was immediately made for them, the company clustering eagerly around, as if expecting to witness an uncommon display of elegant dancing. Nor were they deceived. I had never before seen such a dance as a minuet; the measures which I had learned to tread being confined to jigs and reels, and the still more primitive double-shuffle. I saw a minuet, therefore, for the first time, and, as it happened, danced by as superb a pair of creatures as ever trod a ball-room floor, or walked through the mazes of that dance, the most dignified and beautiful ever invented. Every body was in raptures at the spectacle, and when the dance was over, many clapped their hands, and cried *Bravo* and *Brava*; while I myself, being as much intoxicated with delight as the rest, cried aloud, 'Hurrah for

pretty-toes!' (meaning the fair Alicia,) 'go it ag'in for God's sake!' It was fortunate that the plaudits of the company, which were loud and numerous, drowned my voice, and so prevented the compliment outraging the ears of the beautiful dancer, or, indeed, reaching those of any other person.

"After this, I frequently observed the Colonel's daughter, who was, during the whole evening, so closely besieged by Captain Sharpe, that no one else seemed able to approach her; and I thought to myself, thinks I, 'if we don't get them boats off in no time, the sodger will have the gal from the secretary, or there an't no moonshine.' Verily, the Captain seemed pleased with the lady, and the lady with the Captain.

"It was no very long time after this that I reached that grand acme of courage of which I have spoken; and being tired of playing the looker-on, I resolved to have a dance as well as my betters. So, having paid another visit to the bar, I returned to the ball-room to select a partner; and, as the Old Imp, the father of impudence, would have it, who so proper to serve my turn as the queen of the ball, the lovely Alicia. I can't pretend to recollect what were precisely the

thoughts and feelings which at that moment crowded my conceited noddle; but, I believe, I had a kind of impression that,—from having seen her, during the audience with her father,—I had quite a right to claim her acquaintance. 'At all events, I remember well enough, that I marched up to her, and making a bow and scrape, that unfortunately swept a lieutenant of infantry off his legs, besides some damage done to the skirts of a lady's dress, 'begged to ax the honour to go a jig with her.' She started up, looking as proud and haughty as a peacock, and gave me such a bitter stare as I never thought could come from such amiable eyes. I felt quite incensed at her, thinking myself insulted; and no doubt should have told her so; had not a great confusion suddenly arisen among the gentlemen, some of whom asked 'who the drunken scoundrel was, and how he got in?' while others swore 'I was a rascally boatman,' and 'must be kicked out.' A tall officer, with two epaulettes on, seized me by the shoulders, to hustle me out; whereupon I knocked him down;—a favour that was repaid with interest by half a dozen others, who fell upon me, amidst a confusion of shrieks from the women and outcries from

the men; which is the last I recollect of the adventure; for what with kicks and cuffs, of which I received an abundance, and a tumble down the stairs, that terminated the controversy, I was soon deprived of all sense and remembrance.

THE
BLOODY BROAD-HORN.

CHAPTER IV.

NO MAN A HERO TO HIS OWN VALET-DE-CHAMBRE.

“I RECEIVED, in short, a terrible drubbing, which was doubtless no more than I merited, though more than I afterwards found agreeable. I did not entirely and satisfactorily, indeed, recover my wits until the next day, when I found myself in bed, where I had been deposited by some good-natured souls, and from which it was more than a week before I found myself able to rise again—so soundly and thoroughly had I been threshed for my impertinence. Nor do I believe I should have escaped so soon, had it not been for young Connor, the Secretary, who, with all his faults, was a very kind and humane youth; and, although I had no more claim upon him than I derived from being in the service of

his patron, was very attentive in visiting me and administering to my wants, during the time that I lay sick and suffering, and neglected by every body else. His goodness made a strong impression upon my feelings, and I swore I would requite it with my life-blood, if necessary. In truth, it gained my heart entirely. I learned from him—a piece of information which was the more agreeable to me, as I feared my misfortune would cause me to lose my commission in the broad-horn service—that there was no fear of my being left behind, the voyage having been put off for a time in consequence of my commander's sickness, Colonel Storm being laid upon his back like me, but laid by a different cause—that is, by a new fit of the gout. And, indeed, I was entirely restored before he recovered sufficiently to begin the voyage; which was not until two weeks after the day of my enlistment.

“In the mean while, I found myself a second time with leisure on my hands, and as much disposition as ever to enjoy it. I made several new friends, whom, however, warned by past experience, I did not seek for in a ball-room, nor among those elegant personages, who, I began to perceive, were, or were

resolved to consider themselves, my superiors. At the start, I felt disposed to ask the friendship of the gallant Captain Sharpe; I was now content to swear everlasting friendship with the Captain's man—a scoundrelly fellow, who met my advances with extreme cordiality, and immediately gambled me out of all my money.

“ This worthy individual, who had been a soldier, like his master—a deserter from a British regiment in the revolution—the evening before the broad-horns got under way, treated me to a supper and a bowl of punch; in the course of which he acquainted me with sundry interesting particulars in relation to his master and himself, of which I had been before entirely ignorant. And, first, he gave me to understand, that his master, Captain Sharpe, had volunteered his agreeable society and valiant assistance to my employer, Colonel Storm, in the voyage to Kentucky, having resolved to sail with us, out of pure regard for the Colonel, his father's friend; and, secondly, that he himself, Samuel Jones, the servant, could not countenance his master in any such doings, having a great aversion to Indians, and especially to Indians armed with tomahawks and scalping-knives. In brief, I

found Mr. Samuel Jones was in great dread of the perils of the voyage, which feeling he did all he could to infuse into my own mind. He had picked up every story, true and false, that was told of Indian atrocities committed on the Ohio; and to these he added legends of spectres, devils, and other sepernatural agents, by whom the voyager was often haunted and harassed, and, in spite of himself, driven into the hands of the savages. Thus, he had a story of a phantom warrior in a canoe, (supposed to be the ghost of old Bald Eagle, the Delaware Chief, whose mangled corse, set afloat by his murderer, forms a well-known and ghastfully picturesque incident in border history,) who dogged the boats of emigrants, and by the mere terror of his presence, drove them into the ambush prepared by his living countrymen; and another legend of a still more frightful spectre, a gory refugee, who, when the navigators slept, stole into their boats, and with their own oars, rowed them silently ashore, into the midst of their watchful enemies.

“These strange stories, which had, I confess, the effect of renewing my alarms to a certain extent, I remembered the more readily as I found they had made their way

among my fellow-voyagers, and were afterwards recalled to my mind by events that occurred during the descent.

“ Mr. Samuel Jones, having opened his heart by repeated applications to the bowl, did not refuse to carry his confidence still further; and he told me many curious things concerning his master and other persons, including his excellent self, to which I should have perhaps attached more importance, had I not supposed the punch had made him poetical. He told me what I then considered a very preposterous story about his master; namely, that this exemplary gentleman and soldier, having broken his father’s heart by evil courses, and abandoned, after meanly plundering of her property, a deserving but unhappy wife, (for, Jones assured me, his master was married,) had finished his villainies by debauching the wife of his best friend, and blowing out the husband’s brains by way of reparation; to which latter exploits he owed his sudden exile to the back woods, a further residence in a civilized community having been thus rendered impossible.

“ This account, I repeat, I considered a mere invention of Mr. Jones. And in this opinion I was confirmed by his telling me

sundry stories concerning himself, which, had I believed them, would have proved him as thorough a rogue as his master. My incredulity, however, I soon found, was, in this latter particular, wholly misplaced; for Mr. Jones, who was so unwilling to dare the perils of the Ohio voyage, it was early next morning discovered, had left his master's service some time during the night, having previously taken the precaution to rob the gallant soldier of every valuable he possessed. The only inconvenience resulting from this was, that Captain Sharpe was compelled to borrow all my generous employer's loose cash, to refit for the voyage, having no leisure left to look after the robber. Indeed, within an hour after the discovery of his loss was made—that is, at sunrise that morning, the 26th of April—we unmoored our boats and were soon afloat upon the bosom of the Ohio.

THE
BLOODY BROAD-HORN.

CHAPTER V.

THE VOYAGE BEGUN.

“OUR flotilla consisted of three boats, two of them of very large size, and somewhat overburthened with goods and cattle. That in which I was stationed, being the flag-ship, in which Colonel Storm commanded in person, was somewhat smaller than the others, not so heavily laden, and in all respects better fitted out—a superiority which it doubtless owed to the presence of the fair Alicia, his daughter. It contained, besides the usual cabin for the shelter of the crew, a smaller one set apart for the use of the Colonel’s daughter—a sanctuary which none had the privilege of entering, save the commander himself, the lady’s female attendants, and, sometimes, the gallant Captain Sharpe. The

horses were divided between the larger boats; in fact, every thing on board of the commander's boat seemed to have been arranged with a view to detract as little as possible from his daughter's comfort. The very crew seemed to have been selected with an eye to her approbation, consisting, besides four of the Colonel's oldest and most faithful negroes, of ten men, the soberest and best behaved of all his *engagés*. There were nineteen souls in all on board the boat—Colonel Storm, his daughter and two female servants, Captain Sharpe, and the fourteen men as above mentioned.

“I was surprised, and somewhat disconcerted, to find that my friend Connor was not in the Colonel's boat; but reflecting that the latter had not yet entirely recovered from his gout, and was, indeed, as fretful and irascible as man could be, I thought in my heart that the younker had shown his good sense by entering, as I did not doubt he had done, one of the other boats. What was my astonishment to learn, which I did towards the close of the day, that Connor was not with the party at all—that he had left the Colonel's service—nay, that he had been ignominiously driven from it, in consequence of a

rupture with his patron on the preceding day. This I learned from some of the men whom I heard whispering the matter over among themselves, but who were too little informed on the subject to be able to acquaint me with all the particulars. It seemed, however, that the quarrel had, in some way, grown out of a dispute the secretary had had with Captain Sharpe, in the course of which swords had been drawn between them; though what had so embittered these doughty champions against one another, no one pretended to say. All the men knew was, that the blame was thrown upon Connor—that Colonel Storm had taken part against him, and immediately turned him adrift; since which, nothing had been heard of him by any of the party.

“This intelligence filled me with concern; and such was my affection for the young man, who I was sure (without knowing any thing about it) had been harshly and unjustly treated that I was, for a time, more than half inclined to jump ashore, and return to Pittsburg, for the purpose of seeking him out and offering him my services. But, having mentioned the design to some of my comrades, they gave me so dismal an account of the difficulties and dan-

gers from Indians, which, even at so short a distance from Pittsburg, I should encounter in making my way along the river, that I was frightened out of my purpose, and determined, although reluctantly to remain where I was.

“ As the young man’s misadventure arose from his quarrel with Captain Sharpe, I contracted, from that moment, a strong dislike to the latter, who, it appeared to me, had ousted Connor, only to step into his shoes—to take *his* place in the affections of the grum old Colonel, and, for aught I could tell, in those of his daughter too. I still could not give my belief to the stories told me of Captain Sharpe by his servant; it seemed impossible such things should be true of so elegant a gentleman. Nevertheless, I bore them in mind, resolved, if it should appear that Captain Sharpe was actually making love to the fair Alicia, to make her parent fully acquainted with them.

“ In this, I must confess, I had in view the mortification of Captain Sharpe, rather than the advantage of the Colonel’s daughter, for whom I felt, at first, no very friendly regard. I remembered her haughty and scornful looks at the ball, which I had not yet entirely forgiven; and my disgrace and discomfiture on

that occasion, I considered as entirely owing to her. Besides, as I was now conscious of the distance fate had placed between us, I was, at the beginning of the voyage, in continual fear, lest she should recognise me and make me the butt of her ridicule; an apprehension, however, I soon ceased to entertain, being satisfied she had quite forgotten me.

“ I will here add, that my dislike to the young lady wore, of itself, rapidly away; for, first, it was impossible I should indulge ill will against a creature so young and lovely; and, secondly, I perceived there was something on her mind that rendered her unhappy—something made visible on her face by a sadness that seemed to me to grow deeper day by day. I fancied the cause might be regret for the absence and misfortunes of Connor; a conceit that wonderfully raised her in my esteem.

“ It happened, at the time when we began our voyage, that the river had fallen for the season unusually low; so that some of the knowing persons in Pittsburg, considering the size and weight of the Colonel’s boats, had advised him to wait for a rise of the waters; a piece of advice of which he took no notice, though other emigrants who were ready

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to depart, postponed their voyage accordingly.

“ We were not long in discovering that we gained little but trouble by being in a hurry; for, besides that we got along but slowly, and with hard rowing, in consequence of the gentle current, we were perpetually driving aground, some one boat or the other, upon bars, and sandbanks, from which it was a work of time and labour to escape. Indeed, one of the boats we found it impossible to get from a bar, on which she had grounded some dozen miles or so above Wheeling; and as, from her proximity to this settlement, and her position in the middle of the river, it was not thought she was in any danger from the savages, the crew consented to remain in her, waiting for a flood, and also for the fleet it was expected to bring down from Pittsburg, with which they were to descend the river. We of the other boats, sick of our labours at the oar, rather envied the happy dogs whom we left taking their ease on the bar, with the prospect, in a few days, of resuming their voyage, borne along by the swelling current, without any toil of their own: nevertheless these happy personages, as we afterwards discovered, were, two nights after we left

them, set upon by savages where they lay; and not one of them escaped to tell the story of their fate.

“Nor was that our only loss. Two nights after—perhaps at the very moment when our friends of the stranded boat were dying under the axes of their Indian assailants—the remaining large boat ran upon a snag, by which she was rendered a complete wreck, and we were compelled to abandon her. It was only by the greatest exertions we were so fortunate as to rescue the more valuable portions of her cargo, including two of the Colonel’s finest horses, which we succeeded in transferring to our own boat: the others we left to their fate, after knocking away the side of the boat, and driving them into the river, whence they all swam to the shore, and doubtless soon found Indian masters. The crew, consisting of thirteen persons, was added to our own, which was thus increased to thirty-two souls—a number so greatly disproportioned to the size of our boat, that they were not received without the greatest inconvenience. But this we cared for the less, as we expected soon to reach the new settlement of Marietta, at the mouth of the Muskingum, where it was intended to put some of our su-

perfluous men ashore, to wait for the boat we had left behind.

“ We reached Marietta the next day, and got rid of eight of the wrecked crew, retaining five, of whom two were slaves belonging to our commander in chief, the others *engagés*. Remaining at Marietta during the night, we set out next morning under what might have been considered favourable auspices. The most important of these was a sudden swell of the river, which rose several feet in the night, and was still rapidly rising, when we cast off from the shore. We had thus a prospect of making our way by the mere force of the current, and so escaping, for the remainder of the voyage, the drudgery of the oar; besides clearing all rifts and sand-bars, of which we had already had experience more than enough. We set out, moreover, with such a crew as might be supposed to secure us a perfect exemption from Indian attacks—thirteen *engagés*, all well armed, and acquainted with arms, though no more than one of them had ever faced an Indian in battle; together with five able-bodied negro men, whom the Colonel had provided with muskets, and who could doubtless use them after some fashion; not to speak of the

Colonel himself, who was too gouty for active service, and Captain Sharpe, who, we had no doubt, would fight when the time came, though, at present, as it appeared, more earnestly bent upon making himself agreeable to the commander's daughter than upon preparing for war.

With a military commander on board, (though sorely incapacitated for command,) it may be supposed, our forces were organized upon somewhat a military foundation. We were, at least divided into watches, each of which under its captain, appointed by Colonel Storm, had its regular turn of duty, both by day and by night.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE PHANTOM CANOE.

“ THESE circumstances—the swell of the river and our undoubted strength—removed from the breasts of many the effects of an unfavourable occurrence, of which I have not yet spoken. It will be remembered, that honest master Jones had informed me of the river being haunted by a spectral Indian in a canoe, whose appearance was the forerunner, if not the cause, of disaster; and that our boatmen had also been made acquainted with the legend. The night before we reached Marietta, such a spectre was seen, and seen by all on board—that is to say, a canoe with a human shape in it, dogging us at a considerable distance behind, and dogging us all night long. The watch, at first surprised, and then

alarmed, woke up their sleeping companions; and, as I said, all on board saw it, though all were not, perhaps, of the same opinion in regard to its character. The superstitious declared it could be nothing less than the phantom of which so much had been told: while even those who denied its spectral nature, could explain the phenomenon only by supposing it was the boat of some Indian spy, whose cut-throat companions were lying in wait somewhere nigh at hand.

“Captain Sharpe, to whom we commonly looked as our acting commander, (Colonel Storm being seldom able to come on deck,) upon being called up, laughed at us for a pack of ‘cowardly noodles,’ as he very politely called us, declared we saw nothing but a floating log, or at best, a drift canoe—certainly, he vowed ‘there was no man in it’—and ordered us to back oars a little, to let it float by. Unfortunately for the Captain’s explanation, the moment the broad-horn ceased to move, that moment the canoe, also, became stationary; and some of us swore we could hear the dip of the paddle by which it was brought to a stand and made to stem the current. ‘Ghost or no ghost,’ said Captain Sharpe, dryly enough, ‘it can do us no harm,

so long as it keeps at a distance. If it comes nearer, hail it; and if it make no answer, let it have a taste of your rifles.' With these words, and a desperate yawn, that cut the last word in two, and kept it some forty seconds in the utterance, the gallant soldier went down to his mattress, treating the ghost with a degree of contempt nobody else could summon to his assistance. The ghost—for so the majority were resolved to consider the appearance—was well watched during the night: it kept at a highly respectful distance, and at, or before daylight, it suddenly vanished away.

"The night after we left Marietta, which was very dark and cloudy, the phantom again appeared, and caused as much discussion, and, among some, as much alarm as before; the more so, perhaps, as, when first discovered, it was found to be much nearer to us than on the former occasion; a degree of audacity which those on deck, the men of the second watch, rewarded by a volley of rifle-bullets, according to Captain Sharpe's instructions; forgetting, however, the important preliminary of hailing the mysterious voyager. The effect of the volley was very happy, as boat and boatman instantly vanished from view,

and were no more seen: for which reason no one, not even Captain Sharpe himself, found fault with the men for only half obeying his orders.

“ The disappearance of the phantom restored us all to good humour; and, conscious now of our strength, conscious, too, of our security on the top of the flood, by which we were so rapidly borne upon our voyage, with no necessity before us except that of keeping our boat in the centre of the river, and so out of all danger of Indian bullets from the shore, we began to laugh at past terrors, and assure each other that the voyage to Kentucky was by no means the dreadful thing it was represented to be.

“ From this state of things it is not surprising there resulted a certain degree of carelessness among the men in the night-watches; who, feeling that the hand at the steering-oar could perform all the duty supposed to be requisite to their safety—that is, of keeping the boat in the mid-channel—very frequently took advantage of the watch-hours to throw themselves on the deck and steal a pleasanter nap than could be enjoyed in the crowded cabin below. And this kind of watching, I confess, on two or three occasions, I practised with great satisfaction myself.

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CHAPTER VII.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS IN THE BROAD-HORN.

“IN due course of time, and without further accident, we arrived at the little French settlement of Gallipolis; which, being the last upon the river before reaching the Kentucky settlements, was always a stopping-place, where the emigrant obtained fresh stores of provisions, perhaps; but, certainly, the last news of Indian knaveries on the river below. At this place, it was resolved to remain for a day and night, in the hope of being joined by our stranded boat. The time was passed by all attached to the broad-horn in such frolics and diversions ashore as suited their several humours. Even the fair Alicia, who, by this time, was growing visibly thin and pale—a misfortune which her father, himself

heartily sick of a broad-horn voyage, attributed to the confinement of the boat—was prevailed upon to take several rambles on shore, in which she was attended by Captain Sharpe, now, as every body could see, a fixed favourite of her father, and, as every body imagined, of the lady likewise. But it was observable that Miss Storm never went ashore without having one of her women also with her.

“Rambling along the river myself, it was my fate to stumble upon this little party, at a moment when Captain Sharpe had taken advantage of a momentary separation of the fair Alicia from her servant, to drop upon his knees, and pour into her tender ears a violent declaration of love.—Not that I pretend to have overheard his actual expressions, for I was too far from the pair for that, besides beating a retreat the moment I discovered them, without their having noticed me; but, as I saw him on his knees, in an extremely elegant posture of adoration, I had no right to doubt what kind of prayers he was making. How the lady received his vows, whether favourably or not, I had no means of knowing or discovering, being in as great a hurry to

get out of the way as Captain Sharpe, perhaps, was to win the lady's heart.

"Having no longer any doubt that the handsome soldier had really formed the design of becoming the son-in-law of my commander, and remembering Jones's story of his marriage, as well as my resolution to make Colonel Storm acquainted with it, if necessary, I immediately returned to the boat; where the old gentleman, incapable of leaving it, was growling over his pangs, and, to my surprise, invoking all kinds of maledictions upon Connor, 'for deserting him,' as he expressed it, in a grumbling soliloquy, 'in the midst of his torments and cares.'

"'Sir,' said I, pouncing upon him without ceremony, and thinking this a favourable opportunity to open my communication, 'I thought, and so did every body else, you turned off Mr. Connor yourself!'

"'What's that *your* business, you scoundrel?' said he, as if enraged at my presumption: 'who gave you leave to talk to me about Tom Connor, or any thing else?'

"'Nobody gave it—I take it,' said I; 'and I reckon, that, in turning off Mr. Connor, you got rid of just as good a friend and honest a servant as was ever misused in a fit

of passion—that's my notion. And I reckon, moreover, that, in putting Captain Sharpe into his place, you have helped yourself to a bit of snake-flesh, that will have a snap at you, rale viper-fashion, or at some body you love as well as yourself, some day, there's no doubt on it.'

"' What, you dog ! ' cried Colonel Storm, seeming both incensed and astonished, ' are *you* abusing Sharpe, too ? '

"' I didn't know,' said I, ' that any body had ever said any thing against him. But, I tell you what, Colonel Storm—not to make a long story about it—Captain Sharpe is making love to Miss 'Lishy; and it seems to be generally agreed among us as how you intend to give her to him.'

"' Well, you brazen rascal ! ' roared Colonel Storm, looking as if he would eat me, ' how does that concern *you* ? '

" I had, by this time, got too well accustomed to the commander's mode of conversing with his people, when in a passion, to take offence at his expressions; and, therefore, replied, with as much equanimity as when I began the conversation,—' I don't see that it concerns me much, any way, Colonel; but, I

rather reckon, it concerns a very amiable young lady; and her honour—'

"Her honour, you dog! Do you dare talk to me about my daughter's honour?" cried the old gentleman, with increasing fury.

"Colonel? said I, 'it don't signify being in such a passion, and calling me hard names: —I just mean to tell you, that, if you give Captain Sharpe your daughter, she will get a husband who happens to have one wife,—perhaps half a dozen of 'em,—already.'

"You lie, you thief!" said the veteran, catching at his crutch,—I believe, with the full intention of knocking me on the head; a catastrophe which, supposing I should have permitted it to be attempted, which I was not disposed to do, was prevented by the sudden appearance of the young lady; who, still attended by Captain Sharpe, at that moment entered the boat and the cabin where I had sought her parent. The angry old gentleman's eyes flashed with double rage, as soon as they fell upon the soldier; but, as it happened, it was with rage not at the latter: —'Here, Sharpe, you thief,' he cried, 'here's the old story over again! Knock the villain's brains out—Swears you are married!'

"At these words, the daughter, who,

seeing her father's wrath, was on the point of stealing away to her own cabin, turned round with a look of astonishment and inquiry. 'Same old story Tom Connor got up —lying rascal!' continued the veteran: 'wife already,—poor deserted woman,—broken-hearted.—Rascally invention.—Tumble the dog into the river!'

"'I beg,' said Captain Sharpe, looking for a moment a little confused; but soon recovering his composure,—'I beg Miss Storm will retire a moment, while I inquire into this odd adventure.'

"Miss Storm gave the Captain a searching, I thought even a scornful—though calmly scornful—look, and then stepped up to her father, upon whose shoulder she laid her hand, gazing him earnestly and sadly in the face. 'Father,' she said, 'the position in which I have been placed—need I say, by yourself?—in relation to Captain Sharpe, entitles me to inquire into any charges affecting his honour. I waive the right: I do not even ask *you*, my father, to act upon it. But I must be satisfied upon one point. You drove from you an old and once trusted friend,—Connor: and it seems, (although you never acquainted me with it,) that he preferred

charges against Captain Sharpe;—in short, the very charges which, it seems, this young man brings against him.—Father! was it because of these charges you discarded poor Connor?"

" 'Ay!' grumbled the veteran;—‘ told lies of the Captain:—all slander and malice.’

" 'It is enough,' said the lady; and then added,—‘ Slander and malice never stained the lips of Thomas Connor.’

" 'Spoken like a true-hearted gal!' said I, vastly delighted to find the poor secretary had another friend beside myself in the boat: ‘ And as for this here story about Captain Sharpe’s wife, I hold it to be as true as gospel,—’cause how, his own man Jones told me!’

" 'Excellent authority on which to damn a man’s reputation, certainly,—that of his own robbing, runaway lackey!' cried Captain Sharpe, with a laugh; and then requested that Miss Storm would ‘remain and hear all that the fellow (meaning me) had to say against him.’

" 'It is neither necessary that I should hear, nor he say, any thing more against one who is now—whatever else he may be—my father’s guest,’ replied Miss Storm, calm-

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ly: ‘the subject may be more profitably resumed hereafter. And I beg,’ she added, ‘that neither my father nor Captain Sharpe will cherish any ill will against this young man, for bringing charges, which, however unfounded they may be, had certainly their origin in good-will to my father, or to me.’

“With these words, she retired to her little apartment; and Colonel Storm, denouncing me as ‘a great impudent blockhead,’ ordered me out of the cabin. As for Captain Sharpe, who, I expected, would have been thrown into a terrible rage, he burst into a laugh, as soon as Miss Alicia departed, and told me I was ‘a very simple fellow, but would grow wiser hereafter,’—a mode of treating my charges which somewhat lessened my own opinion of their justice.

“And so ended my assault upon the honour and dignity of Captain Sharpe, in which, though I met with nothing but discomfiture, I had the good fortune, without, however, knowing it until some time afterwards, to make a friend of the fair Alicia.

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CHAPTER VIII.

PREPARATION FOR WAR.—VISIT FROM A SPECTRE.

“THE next morning, having waited in vain for our lagging boat, we bade farewell to the settlers of Gallipolis, by whom we were advised to be on our guard during the remainder of the voyage; and especially to beware of the country about the mouth of the Scioto, where several doleful accidents had already happened, and where boats were so frequently attacked that it was suspected the savages had there formed a permanent post for the annoyance of emigrants.

“We were told also to have a care against being led into danger by white men—refugees and renegades; who were accustomed to present themselves on the banks of the river, at the appearance of a boat, into which

they piteously entreated to be taken, declaring themselves captives just escaped from the Indians, or shipwrecked boatmen left helpless amid the horrors of the wilderness; which protestations, when hearkened to, commonly led the unsuspecting emigrant into an Indian ambush prepared for him on the shore, and thus to death or captivity. This peculiar caution had been several times before enforced upon us at the settlements we had previously visited; and we left Gallipolis with a full determination to be cajoled by no such villainous wiles, how craftily soever devised and practised.

“ We were now, as we had every reason to believe, much nearer to danger from the Indians than we had been before, in the higher regions of the Ohio: yet, it is certain, we left Gallipolis with less fear and anxiety among us than when we set out. We had, in fact, become accustomed to our boat, to the Ohio, to the solitude of the wilderness through which we floated, to the idea of danger, which we had conned over in our minds until we grew tired of it, and turned to happier and more cheerful thoughts. We were better navigators too, and understood our power of keeping ourselves out of mischief,

by keeping our boat from the banks of the river, and so beyond the reach of Indian rifles; and, besides, we were all learned in Indian wiles and stratagems, to know which was to know how to escape them.

“ And thus it happened, that we left Gallipolis with light hearts, and approached the scene where danger was most to be apprehended, with a degree of indifference amounting almost to fatality. Such blind security, growing with increase of peril, and attended with every kind of carelessness and negligence, was often found among the Ohio voyagers of that day, and was as often the cause of calamities, which a little common-sense solicitude would have enabled the unhappy adventurers easily to avoid.

“ The day on which we left Gallipolis proved, perhaps, the most agreeable of the whole voyage. It was now late in Spring; the weather was warm and genial, and the magnificent forests bordering the river were in full leaf and bloom, filling the eye with beauty and the nostrils with sweet odours. The evening was still more delicious, and was passed by the *engagès* in mirth and jollity, in singing, and even in dancing; for which we had an incentive provided in a fiddle, sawed

and clawed in the true old 'Virginny,' style by one of the Colonel's negroes. And in this kind of diversion we were freely indulged by our commander, because it seemed to amuse the mind of his fair daughter, who sat for awhile looking on the dance, smiling encouragement.

"By and by, however, the weather changed, and a shower fell, which put an end to the untimely revelry; and the dancers retreated to the cabin and their beds, leaving the deck in possession of the usual watch of four men, of whom the one at the steering oar was the only one actually engaged in any duty. This first shower was but the precursor of others, which continued to fall at intervals during the night, and of a change from warm to very cold weather; so that, by and by, the deck lost many of its charms, even to the men of the watch, becoming, in truth, the most uncomfortable part of the whole boat. I remember being vastly pleased at ending my own watch, which happened at midnight, and creeping down to a warm bunk in the cabin, where slumber was so many degrees more agreeable than in the cold wet air above.

"Upon leaving Gallipolis, Captain Sharpe, who was often seized with fits of military

fire and zeal, had thought proper to harangue the crew upon the dangers we ought now to expect to encounter, and exhort us to a careful performance of all our duties, of which the night-watching was, as he justly observed, the most important; and as we should, in all probability, during the course of the following night, reach the mouth of the Scioto, which, all knew, was regarded as the most dangerous point of the whole navigation, he especially enjoined it upon us, this night, to watch in reality—that is, to keep our eyes open and about us, instead of lying down to sleep, as we had been in the habit of doing for several nights past. And to encourage us in our duties, he declared that he intended for the future, or so long as danger should seem to threaten, to share them with us—that is, to take part with us in the watch; and he accordingly appointed himself to the middle watch, the longest and dreariest of all, from midnight until four in the morning.

“ His zeal greatly delighted Colonel Storm, who swore, ‘ that was the way for a soldier to behave;’ though I cannot say it was equally agreeable to the boatmen. On the contrary, I heard a great deal of grumbling among them, upon this particular night,

when, at the change of the watch, Captain Sharpe was heard getting up to join the next band of watchers. It was generally apprehended that the presence of the disciplined soldier would interfere with all the little arrangements which the men might otherwise have taken to secure their own comfort. Happily for the grumblers, Captain Sharpe proved to be no such severe disciplinarian.

“I retired to my bed, and there slept, perhaps, three hours; when I was wakened by a terrible dream of Indians attacking the boat; which so disturbed and disordered my mind that I was not able to get to sleep again; and being weary of my cot, I got up, and crept to the deck, for the purpose of looking out upon the night. As I made my way through the cabin, in which was burning a little lamp, yielding a meagre light, I was astonished to perceive Captain Sharpe, with several—indeed, as it afterward proved, all—the men of his watch, lying sound asleep on the floor, having evidently slipt away, one after the other, from their duties on deck.

“Although surprised at this dereliction on the part of the gallant soldier, especially after the great zeal he had displayed during the day, I was not at all concerned or alarmed,

being of an opinion, which I had frequently expressed, when kept longer than I liked at the helm—namely, that the boat could make her way down the river just as well without steering as with. Nevertheless, as the experiment had never before been actually tried, I felt some curiosity to find how it succeeded; and accordingly stept immediately out on deck to see; which was a feat the less disagreeable as the showers were now over, the clouds had broken away, and the stars shining so brilliantly that objects nigh at hand could be pretty distinctly discerned.

“Knowing that all the watch were in the cabin fast asleep, judge my astonishment to find, as I did, the moment I reached the deck, a human figure at the steering oar, and the boat within but half a dozen yards of the river-bank, upon which the unknown helmsman seemed urging it with might and main; and fancy the terror that instantly seized me, when, looking upon the apparition, I discovered the spectral refugee, (for who could it be but he?) the hero of the ghost story, who, with a person all ghastly to behold, and a visage bound with a bloody handkerchief, and cadaverously resembling my poor discarded friend, Tom Connor’s, had stolen into

the boat, and was now driving it furiously ashore.

“ At this sight, I was seized with a terrible panic, as may be supposed, and uttering a yell that instantly roused every soul on board, leaped from the deck among my comrades, who came tumbling out, some shrieking ‘ Indians! ’ and others asking what was the matter. I told them we were going ashore, and that a ghost was at the helm; upon which two thirds of them ran back into the cabin, where they fell upon their knees and cried for mercy, while others, bolder or more curious, rushed upon the deck to have a view of the spectre. But the spectre was gone, entirely vanished away into air, or into the river; and the only evidence of his visit was seen as the broad-horn suddenly swept round a jutting point, which it almost touched, and then, borne onwards by a powerful current, shot again into the channel.

“ This extraordinary occurrence produced, as may be imagined, an extraordinary ferment; in the midst of which I was summoned to the presence of the commander in chief; with whom I found the fair Alicia, looking wild with fright, and also Captain Sharpe, the latter busily engaged in assuring Colonel Storm,

for I overheard him, as I approached, that 'all was well—nothing was the matter, only an uproar made by a man roused from his sleep by the nightmare.'

" 'You saw a ghost, you loon?' said Colonel Storm, turning from the soldier to myself; 'what's the matter?'

"Upon this, I told the veteran the whole story, not omitting the soldierly desertion of his post by the gallant Captain—notwithstanding that this worthy gentleman made me many significant hints to hold my tongue—among others, by touching his pocket with one hand and his lip with the other, as if to say, 'keep your peace, and you shall be well rewarded;' and then scowling like a thunder-gust, when he found I proceeded, without regarding his efforts to check me.

"My relation produced a considerable effect both upon the old gentleman and his daughter; but it seemed to me, they were more struck by the exposure of Captain Sharpe's desertion of his post, than by any thing else, the lady looking upon him with mingled wonder and contempt, while the Colonel grumbled his displeasure aloud—'Conduct for a court-martial—Fine officer-like behaviour, by George, sir!'

“ Captain Sharpe declared ‘ it was all a mistake—a very unaccountable occurrence; protested he had not left the deck two minutes, and only left it to treat the watch, who were cold and wet, to a glass of liquor; and that it was a mere accident and inadvertence, if the helmsman left his post at the same time;’ all which—as unconscionable a falsehood as was ever uttered—the worthy personage offered to prove by calling in the men; whose assertions, backed by his own word, ‘ he hoped Colonel Storm would think sufficient to disprove the charge of a single individual like me, especially after the veritable nonsense I had just told them about the ghost.’

“ ‘ Humph ! ’ said the Colonel, with a snort—‘ what sort of a ghost was it?’

“ ‘ It was like Mr. Connor,’ said I; ‘ only that it was pale and grim, and had a bloody handkerchief round its brows.’—At which words, Miss Storm looked wilder than ever, and even the Colonel her father started, with a piteous ‘ God bless my soul ! Hope nothing has happened the boy—Never forgive myself, if he should haunt me ! ’

“ Here Captain Sharpe interfered, asking the Colonel with a laugh, ‘ if he really believed my ridiculous story? if he did not see

that the poor lad' (meaning me,) 'had been dreaming; and that all I had seen, or thought I had seen, was mere visionary nothing.' In short, I believe he quite staggered the Colonel; who, however, having finished examining me, ordered me out of the cabin; so that I never knew what was the result of Captain Sharpe's ingenious attempt to explain away his desertion of his duties on deck.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE INDIAN CAMP—AGREEABLE SURPRISE.

“THE sensation produced by this adventure on the crew was too deep to readily subside, and they remained upon deck for the remainder of the night, now questioning me upon the particulars of the ghostly visitation, now speculating upon the consequences it foreboded; all of them agreeing, in the end, that it was an omen of some disaster, which must sooner or later, occur. There was no carelessness or negligence now; the helm was doubly manned, as were also our three pair of oars, at which the men voluntarily placed themselves, not indeed, to row, but ready to give way with all their force, at the first appearance of danger.

“In this condition of things, we floated on-

wards till the gray of dawn; at which period a fog began to settle on the river, obscuring, although not entirely concealing, the banks, the larger objects, as the hills and trees, being still partially discernible at the distance of one or two hundred yards. At this period also, we noticed an appearance upon the shore which immediately forced upon us the conviction that the warning of the spectral appearance had not been made in vain. This was the sudden gleam of a fire on the right bank of the river, followed by a second, and this again by others; until, in fact, no less than six or seven different fires were seen faintly glimmering through the fog and dusk of morning.

“ It will be readily supposed that this appearance struck us all with alarm, as, indeed, it did. Not doubting that these portentous lights came from Indian watchfires, and that they were burning in the camp of which we had heard so much at Gallipolis, we immediately sent word down to our commander, and then, without waiting for orders, began to direct the boat over towards the Virginia, or Kentucky side, taking care, however, to handle our oars with as little noise as possible, not at all desiring to disturb the slumbers of

the red barbarians, who, we doubted not, were lying stretched around the fires.

“ But there were vigilant watchers in the dreaded camp; and just as our commander, startled out of gout and incapacity by the sudden intelligence, hobbled out upon deck, a clear voice rang from the shore—‘ Boat ahoy!’ and then hastily added—‘ If you are good Americans, hold oars a moment; we have good news for you—and for all honest men —to carry down to the settlements.’

“ ‘ You lie, you refugee rascal !’ cried Colonel Storm, with a voice louder than the hailer’s: ‘ Can’t put any of your cursed tricks upon an old soldier. Handle your arms, men,’ he added, addressing the crew, and still speaking at the top of his voice;—‘ handle your arms, and give the villain a shot.’

“ ‘ Give me a shot !’ exclaimed the stranger, with a tone of indignation ; ‘ why, who the devil do you take us to be?’

“ ‘ You !’ quoth Colonel Storm, ‘ I take to be a white Indian—a renegade ragamuffin from the settlements—whose business is to decoy numskull emigrants into ambush; and your companions I take to be a knot of damnable savages, ripe for plunder and murder.’

“‘Sir,’ quoth the invisible speaker, ‘you were never more mistaken in your life. We are white men, and soldiers—a detachment of five hundred mounted men from the army at Fort Hamilton.’

“‘Hah!’ cried Colonel Storm, while all of us pricked our ears in amazement—‘white men? a detachment from St. Clair’s army? Who’s your commander?’

“‘Colonel Darke, of the Infantry,’ was the immediate reply.

“The name of this gallant officer, already well known as one of the best of St. Clair’s lieutenants, completed our surprise, besides throwing Colonel Storm into a ferment of delight. ‘Knew him of old—were captains together at Monmouth!’ he cried; and immediately after, having ordered the rowers to back oars, demanded ‘what they—the detachment—were doing, or had done there?’ an inquiry which was, however, anticipated by the stranger crying—‘We have broken up the Indian camp here—fell upon the dogs this morning by daybreak—took them by surprise, destroyed and captured fifty-three warriors, drowned a dozen or two more, with a loss on our own side of only eleven killed and wounded.’

“‘ Back oars;—three cheers for Darke and his gallant men!’ cried Colonel Storm, adding his own warlike voice to the lusty and joyous hurrahs, which we instantly set up.

“‘ Now,’ quoth our friend on shore, ‘ you behave like men of sense! I am on duty here to hail boats; by the first one of which that arrives, our commander desires to send the news of our victory to the settlements and the Commander-in-chief.’

“‘ Will bear his despatches, were it to the end of the earth!’ cried Colonel Storm, with enthusiasm.

“‘ And, perhaps,’ said the officer-sentinel, for such he seemed, ‘ you could make room for a poor wounded officer—young Darke, the Colonel’s nephew—whom the commander is anxious to send to the settlements?’

“‘ Shall have my own bed!’ roared our veteran chief; adding immediately a command to ‘put the boat ashore;’ an order which the crew, excited to rapture by the glorious news, received with loud cheers, and instantly put into execution. The prow was turned to the shore, and all that could seized at once upon the oars, urging the clumsy vessel across the current; while the stranger ran along the bank, directing us to the most advantageous point to land.

“In two minutes, the broad-horn grated upon the sand, and three of our men, one of them holding a rope, leaped ashore to make her fast; the rest of us crowded together on the deck, looking eagerly for our new friends, those gallant spirits who had so effectually swept the banks of the dreaded Indians.

“‘Three more cheers for Darke and his brave boys all!’ roared Colonel Storm; at which words a great halloo was raised—*but not by us*. It was the yell of a hundred savages, who suddenly started to life, leaping from among stones and bushes; and, giving out such whoops as were never before heard but from the lungs of devils incarnate, poured a sudden fire of rifles upon us, which, aimed at us, all clustered together on the narrow deck, and from the distance of only a few paces, wrought the most horrible carnage, killing, I verily believe, one-half of our whole number, and wounding, with but two or three exceptions, every other soul on board. And in the midst of it all, we could hear the voice of the fiendish renegade, to whose unparallelled duplicity we had thus miserably become the victims, exclaiming, with a taunting laugh, ‘What do you think of the “cursed refugees’ tricks” now, my fine fellows?’

THE
BLOODY BROAD-HORN.

CHAPTER X.

THE INDIAN ATTACK.

“ ‘PUSH off!’ cried Colonel Storm; but there were none to answer his call. The deck was occupied by the dead and the dying only; all who could move having leaped down below, where they lay, some groaning and bleeding to death, some uttering hurried prayers, but all in a frenzy of terror, all trying to shelter themselves amongst bales and boxes from the shot, which the enemy, not yet content with slaughter, continued to pour into our wretched boat. Colonel Storm, himself struck down by a bullet through the thigh, lay amidst the rest; not, indeed, cowering or lamenting, but calling upon us, with direful oaths, now to ‘push off, and handle the oars,’ now to ‘get up, like men, and give the dogs

one taste of our gunpowder ;' commands, which, however, no one regarded.

"We had struck the land at a projecting point, and the strength of the current did for us the service our commander called upon us in vain to perform ; it swept us free from the bank, and we again floated down the tide—but, alas, only for a moment. With men at the oars to take advantage of the boat's liberation, we might have easily profited by this providential circumstance, and made our way again into the middle of the river, and thus to safety. But no one thought of daring the peril of those fatal bullets, which swept the deck and perforated our flimsy bulwarks of plank. The broad-horn was left to herself—to the current, which, having swept her from the bank, in one moment more lodged her among the branches of a fallen tree, a gigantic sycamore, whose roots still embraced the bank, while its branches, stretched out like the arms of a huge polypus in the tide, arrested her in her flight, and held her entangled at the distance of twenty yards from the bank.

" 'Is there a *man* in the boat?' yelled the disabled commander, perceiving this new misfortune, of which the Indians could be seen taking advantage, by endeavouring to

make their way along the vibrating trunk to the boat; 'Is there a man who would rather take a wound, trying to save himself, by cutting loose from that tree, than die cowering like a butchered dog, here in the bottom of the boat?'

"Nobody replied, save by looks, which each directed upon the other, full at once of solicitation and horror. The Colonel's appeal was the signal for new yells and hotter volleys from the shore, by the latter of which the two horses, whose furious kicks and struggles had added to the terror of the scene, were soon killed, affording a shelter by their bodies, behind which several of my comrades immediately took refuge.

"'Cowards!' roared Colonel Storm, 'will none of you make an effort to save your lives?'

"He turned his eyes upon Captain Sharpe, who, one of the first to leap from the deck, now lay among the boxes, as pale as death, and glaring in what seemed to me a stupor of fear. 'Sharpe, by G—!' cried Colonel Storm, in tones of fierce reproach and indignation, 'do you call *that* acting like a soldier? Up like a man; take an axe and cut us loose—or never more look on my daughter!'

“Captain Sharpe made no other reply than by opening his eyes still wider upon the veteran, and looking even more ghastly than before; upon which, Colonel Storm, bursting into a terrible rage, reviled him in furious language, as a ‘base dastard,’ ‘a mean sneaking villain’—in short, every thing that was vile and contemptible; all which the dishonoured soldier replied to only by the same unmeaning and cadaverous stare.

“In the meanwhile, the bullets were still showering among us like a driving rain, destroying more lives, and wounding the wounded over again; while the savages, whose terrific yells were as incessant as the explosions of their guns, were approaching on the sycamore, to carry the devoted broad-horn by boarding.

“‘A hundred dollars—a thousand!’ cried Colonel Storm, looking around him with eyes of mingled wrath and entreaty; ‘a thousand dollars to any man who will cut loose that cursed bough that holds us! Hark, men! a thousand dollars! two thousand—ten thousand—all I am worth in the world! do you hear, dogs? all I am worth in the world. Do you hear me, villains? If the savages board us, they will murder my daughter.

All I am worth in the world to him that saves her; ay, and herself, too! He that saves her shall have her to wife, with my whole fortune for her portion!"

"I know not what effect these frenzied words, wrung by paternal anguish from the old soldier, had in stimulating the spirits of those few in the boat who really possessed any power of resistance; but, certain it is, several of the men immediately betrayed a disposition to obey the Colonel's call, and attempt somewhat towards the salvation of their companions. Wounded by a shot through my left arm, which was, however, not a serious hurt, and, as I confess, as much overcome by fright as the others, I felt a sudden courage start in my veins; though such was the disorder of my whole mind, that I know not in reality whether it was incited by the great prize offered by my commander, or by a feeling of desperation, which, for a moment, took possession of me. I snatched up a rifle with one hand, and an axe with the other, and sprang to my feet, with the full intention of cutting the boat loose from the tree, or of perishing in the endeavour; in which resolution, however, I was forestalled by a fellow-boatman, named Parker, who sprang up be-

fore me, exclaiming with a profane levity both singular and shocking, considering his situation—‘A wife and a fortune, or death and d——tion!’ and leaped upon the forecastle, from which he immediately fell backwards a dead man, having received a rifle bullet directly through the heart. His fall quenched the fire of my own courage, filling me again with dismay; and firing off my piece at a yelling savage, whom I saw, at that very moment, stepping from the sycamore into the boat, I cowered away among the cargo, as before, without even waiting to see the effect of my shot.”

“ ‘Villains and cravens!’ cried Colonel Storm, whom this mischance and failure seemed to drive into greater frenzy than before—‘villains, who fear to face an Indian! here’s work that will suit your cowardly spirits better: a thousand dollars to him that will enter the cabin, and blow my daughter’s brains out! It is better she should die *now* than by the scalping-knife of an Indian!’

THE

BLOODY BROAD-HORN.

CHAPTER XI.

RETURN OF THE SPECTRE—THE DELIVERANCE.

“I HAVE no doubt, that in this hideous proposal, the poor distracted father, incapable of rising or moving, and, therefore, of yielding his daughter any protection, was quite in earnest; but, of course, this call was as little likely to be obeyed as the other; though it stung me into something like shame, that among so many men as we had still alive in the boat, there should not be one able or willing to strike a blow on behalf of a young and helpless woman. This shame nerved me anew with a kind of courage, which I had immediately an opportunity of employing to advantage; although certain I am, it must have soon died away under the horrors that

followed, had not aid and encouragement reached us from an unexpected quarter.

“Three Indians suddenly made their appearance at the bow of the boat, of whom one was still clambering among the shaking branches of the sycamore, while the two others sprang, with loud whoops, upon the forecastle. I fired my piece, which I had recharged at the first pulse of excitement, at the foremost Indian, who fell down among us in the agonies of death; while a second shot, fired by some unknown hand from the river, took effect on his comrade, who also fell dead. At the same moment, there sprang into the boat a figure in which I recognised, at the first glance—could I believe my eyes? —the phantom of the oar—that very spectre, on whose pallid forehead was wrapped a handkerchief spotted with crusted blood, whose appearance had been supposed to portend the calamity which had now overtaken us. The likeness to young Connor was now more apparent than ever; and, indeed, extended even to the voice, with which the apparition, as he leaped upon the forecastle, exclaimed, in tones that thrilled us all to the marrow—‘If you are not the wretchedest dastards that ever lay still to be murdered,

up and shoot!—up and shoot!—while I cut the boat loose!' With which words, he snatched up from the forecastle, where it had been dropt by the dying Parker, an axe, with which he immediately attacked, and, with a blow, struck down the third savage; and then fell to work on the branch by which we were entangled, shouting to us, all the while, to 'fire upon the enemy,' whose bullets, aimed at himself, he seemed entirely to disregard, while escaping them by a miracle.

" 'It is Tom Connor *himself!*' cried I, fired by his extraordinary appearance into such spirit as I had never before felt—'give it to the dogs, and he will save us!'

" I seized upon another gun, of which the dead and wounded had left enough lying about, already loaded; and backed by three other men, who now recovered their courage, let fly among a cluster of savages who were scrambling one over the other among the boughs of the tree. My supporters did the same; and our shots, each telling upon an enemy, produced, among other good effects, a diversion in favour of our auxiliary with the axe; who, still wielding his weapon, shouted to us to 'leave our guns and take to the oars'—a command that was obeyed by

myself and one other boatman, who followed me to the deck.

“ We had scarce touched the oars, before the broad-horn swung free, and floated rapidly from the sycamore and from the bank.

“ ‘ Give way, and all are safe ! ’ cried our preserver, dropping his axe, and springing to the steering-oar, with which he directed the boat into the centre of the river, calling all the time, though in vain, for others to come up and help at the oars. None were willing —and, alas, as we soon discovered, few were able—to help us; and the further labour, with the danger, of completing our escape, was left entirely to ourselves—to three men, each of whom stood fully exposed to the shots of the enemy, of which many a one took effect on our bodies. It was not, indeed, until we had put nearly the whole width of the river between the broad-horn and her assailants, and when the danger was almost, if not entirely over, that we received any assistance. Three men, of whom one was entirely unhurt, the others but slightly wounded, then crept up, and took our places at the oars, which we were scarce able longer to maintain.

“ I turned to Connor—for Connor it was—

who, crying out, ‘Well done, Michael Law! we’ve saved the boat, if we die for it’—fell flat upon his face on the deck, deprived of all sense, and, as I at first feared, of life. He was, indeed, desperately wounded in many places; having, besides the recent marks of combat, several wounds, one of which was on his head, that seemed to have been received several days before. Upon taking him up, I discovered he was still breathing, though faintly; on which, with the assistance of my comrades, I carried him into the cabin, where lay, or rather sat the wounded Colonel; who, though aware of our escape from the Indians, was yet ignorant of the means by which our deliverance had been effected.

“‘Bravo! victory!’ he cried, with exulting voice, the moment he laid eyes on me; ‘you’ve beaten the enemy, Mike Law, and I’ll make your fortune! But what poor devil’s this you’re lugging among us, where there’s so many dead already?’

“‘This,’ said I, ‘Colonel’—laying the young man at his feet—‘is the true-blue that won us the victory—no less a man than your turned-off friend, Tom Connor.’

“‘Tom Connor!’ cried he, looking with

amazement upon the youth's countenance, all pale and stained with blood; 'tis he, by heavens! But how came he among us?'

"The Lord sent him," said I—and said it very seriously; 'for, sure, he came in no mortal way whatever. All I know is, that he jumped right out of the river into the broad-horn, shot a savage as he jumped, picked up Sam Parker's axe, and killed another; and then cut us loose from the sycamore, and steered us into the channel.'

"What!" cried Colonel Storm; 'Tom Connor do this? Tom Connor, that was such a fiddling, dancing, book-reading, verse-writing, womanish good-for-naught? What! Tom Connor kill two Indians, when that cursed coward, Sharpe there, slunk away like a ducked kitten? Call my girl here! He shall have her, and cut Sharpe's throat into the bargain. Throw the white-livered rascal overboard!'

"I turned my looks upon the dishonoured soldier, who lay, as I had left him, still cowering behind a box, with his eyes yet sending out a ghastly glare as before. Looking at him more intently, I perceived he was dead: indeed, he had received a bullet directly through the spine and heart, which had struck

him while in the act of turning and leaping from the deck. I informed the Colonel of this mischance; but he was now hugging and weeping over the wounded Connor, whom he swore he loved better than his own soul, and would never abuse again as long as he lived.

“ The veteran then, being reminded of his daughter, bade me look her out in her cabin; where, guided by the lamentations of her women, who burst into yells (for I believe they took me for an Indian,) as I entered, I found her lying in a swoon, into which she had fallen at the beginning of the action. Neither she nor her attendants had received any hurt, the little cabin being bullet-proof; and charging the latter to hold their peace, recover their mistress from her swoon, and then come to the assistance of the wounded men, I went again into the main cabin, and upon deck, to look upon the state of affairs, and examine into the extent of our losses. These were, indeed, dreadful. Of twenty men, nine were already dead, and all the others, one only excepted, severely wounded, four of them, as it was afterwards proved, mortally.”

THE
BLOODY BROAD-HORN.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION OF THE VOYAGE.

“ But enough of these melancholy details,” continued the narrator, looking around him. “ We are now upon the very scene of the calamity. Upon that bank, where now stands a flourishing town,” (it was the town of Portsmouth,) “ were hidden our murderous foes ; upon yonder point lay the sycamore, in whose boughs we were entangled ; and yonder, below, upon the Kentucky shore, is the cove into which we threw the bodies of nine men, our murdered companions.—The recollection is saddening ; and it comes to me still more mournfully, surrounded by these hills, and those clumps of trees—the remnants of the old forest—which witnessed our disaster and sufferings. I will but mention a few

other circumstances, and then have done with the relation.

“ The death of Captain Sharpe, who, whatever were his faults, was undoubtedly no coward, (indeed, I afterwards discovered he had distinguished himself in some of the closing scenes of the Revolution,) afforded the best explanation of the supposed panic which had kindled the indignation of our old commander; and Colonel Storm himself used afterwards to tell me, he was shocked to think the reproaches and revilings he had given way to, were poured into the ears of a corpse. But I am sorry to say, we found upon his body papers which fully established all the charges made against him by his runaway servant, and satisfied even Colonel Storm that, had he given him his daughter, he would have wedded her to dishonour and misery.

“ At the very moment when we were engaged casting his body into the river, we came up with, and took possession of, a drifting canoe; which threw, for the first time, a little light upon the riddle, hitherto inexplicable, of the sudden appearance of Mr. Connor. It contained a blanket or two, a store of provisions, ammunition, and other necessaries, including a deal of superfluous clothing, all

marked with Connor's name. He had descended the Ohio, then, in a canoe, and alone!

"As this suspicion entered my mind, I be-thought me of the phantom boat, following us by night; and was frightened to remember that *I* had made one of the superstitious party who saluted the solitary voyager with their rifles. I remembered also the spectre at the oar; and easily conceived that in that spectre, falsely supposed to be directing the boat ashore, I had seen poor Connor, who, observing our deck deserted by the watch, and the boat drifting upon the point of land, had crept softly on board, and was urging her again into deep water, when my appearance drove him to flight.

"These suspicions were all soon confirmed by Connor's own confessions, made when he recovered his senses, and found himself again restored to the veteran's favour. Though discarded, and with disgrace, at a moment of ill temper, which was perhaps increased by his own petulance, his heart was still with his benefactor, whom he resolved to follow to Kentucky; and finding no other means of descending the river, without waiting for the rise of waters that was to waft away the fleet

of broad-horns, he formed the desperate determination to follow us in a canoe, which he had procured for the purpose; and in which, with a single companion, who, however, alarmed at the perils to be encountered, deserted him at Wheeling, he commenced the voyage. From Wheeling, he had descended the river entirely alone.

“ He easily gained upon our boat, of which he often heard news, and all that he sought to know of his old patron, at our different stopping-places; but shame and other feelings, which a young, proud spirit may easily conceive, prevented his joining us, or making himself known; though they did not prevent his hovering near us by night, until the unfortunate volley we let fly at him, by which he had been actually wounded, taught him to preserve a more respectful distance. His fears and anxieties, however, on this night, (for *he* had also been told, at Gallipolis, of the dangers of the Scioto,) caused him again to approach the broad-horn; when, perceiving that all hands were asleep, and the boat in danger of going ashore, he had stolen aboard, and had just succeeded in making her clear the point, when discovered by me. In the confusion that followed, he easily slipped

back again into the canoe, and was hidden in the darkness of the night. From that moment, he had kept at a distance, until the sounds of conflict brought him to our side, to render us the service to which we owed our deliverance.

“ Such was young Connor’s story, with which I may well close my own.

“ A few hours after the battle we were joined by a fleet of boats, the same we had left at Pittsburg, which had passed the battle ground without loss, and now supplied us several fresh hands, with whose assistance we were able to keep them company, until the voyage was finished, early the next day, at Limestone, in Kentucky.

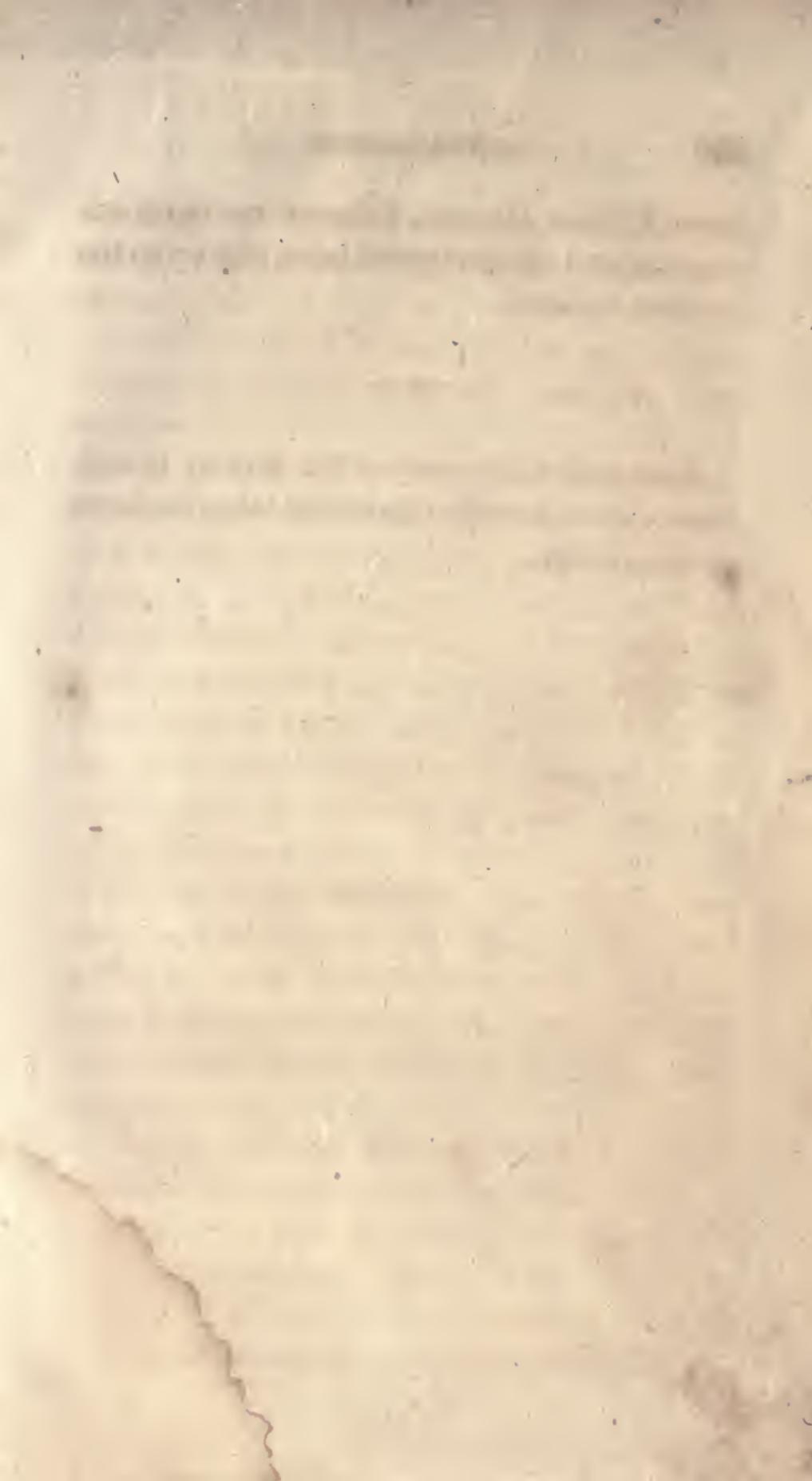
“ Colonel Storm and Connor both recovered in a short time from their wounds; and so did I. And in two months after our arrival in Kentucky, I had the satisfaction of dancing at the wedding of the fair Alicia and her preserver.

“ I may add, that to the friendship, or gratitude, of these three individuals, all of whom seemed to believe I had, in some way or other, done them good service, I owed a change in fortune and condition—a commencement of happiness and prosperity, which

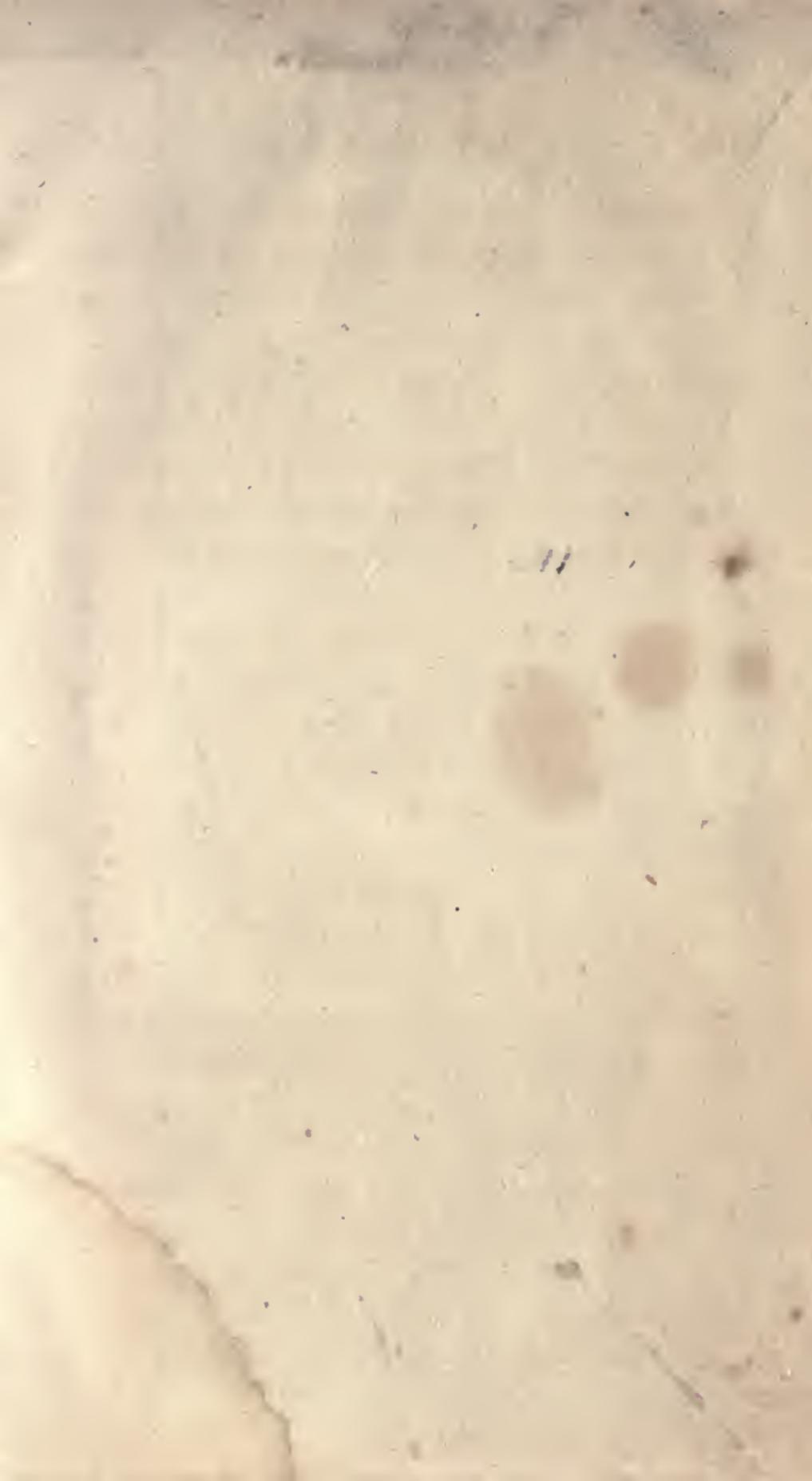
have, I thank Heavon, followed me with unvarying and uninterrupted benignity up to the present moment.

Thus ended the story of the Bloody Broad-horn.—And here its chronicler takes his leave of the reader.

THE END.



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